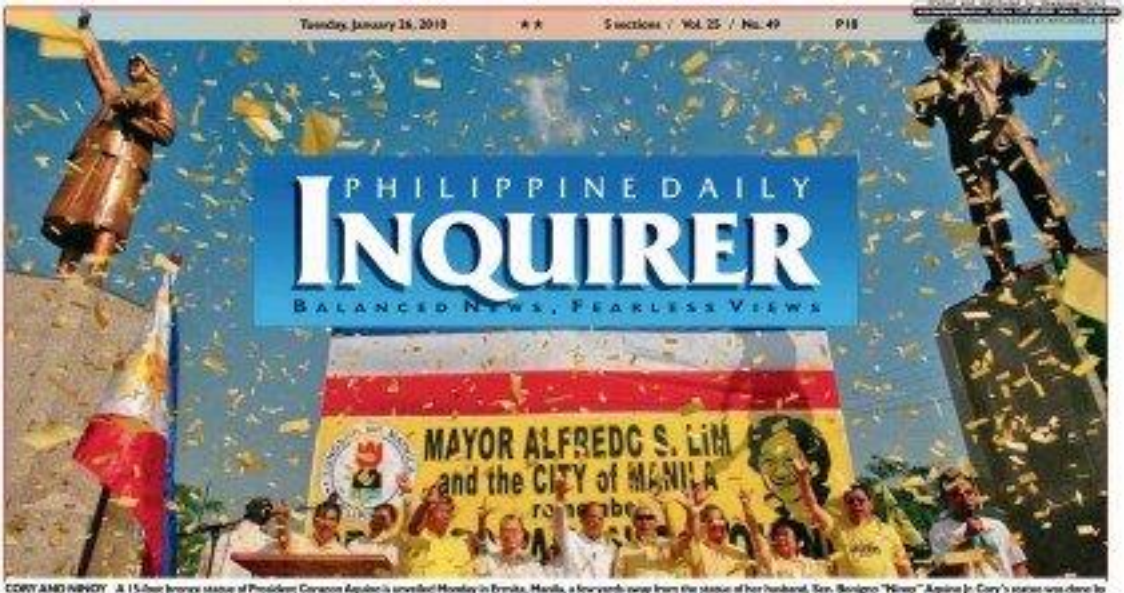
Tuesday, January 26, 2010 ★★ 5 sections / Vol. 25 / No. 49 P18

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS



CORY AND NINOY A 15-foot bronze statue of President Corazon Aquino is unveiled Monday in Ermita, Manila, a few yards away from the statue of her husband, Sen. Benigno "Ninoy" Aquino Jr. Cory's statue was done by sculptor Eduardo Castrillo, as part of the late president's 77th birthday celebration. Sen. Benigno "Noynoy" Aquino III and Manila Mayor Alfredo Lim led the unveiling ceremony. (See story on Page A3.) NIÑO JESUS

C-5 report splits Senate

Villar still a no-show in debate

By Christine O. Avendaño and Michael Lim Ubac

AS TEMPERS FLARED and unparliamentary language flew, the Senate turned into a battle zone yesterday when it finally mustered a quorum to tackle the draft report of the committee of the whole recommending the censure of Sen. Manuel Villar for unethical conduct in connection with the C-5 road extension project.

Then political blows in the chamber presented two reports on a controversy involving Villar, presidential candidate of the Nacionalista Party.

Allies came to the defense of Villar, who was a no-show, prompting a senator supporting the committee report presented by Senate President Juan Ponce Enrile to call the former's defenders the "Villar Express."

C-5 REPORT, A4

CAYETANO: Villar's chief defender on the Senate floor JOE VALDEZ

PIMENTEL: Basing for Resolution No. 1472: clearing Villar JOE VALDEZ

VILLAR: I don't want to speak for now. I don't want to be dictated upon ... JOE VALDEZ

ESTRADA AND ENRILE: One-two punch JOE VALDEZ

ROXAS: This is an affront to my wife! JOE VALDEZ

MADRIGAL: Why is the Villar express train being forced on us? JOE VALDEZ

21-man RP medical team off to Haiti

By Christian V. Esguerra and Cynthia D. Balana

NOTING THAT FILIPINOS ARE NO strangers to natural disasters, like the earthquake that shattered Haiti, President Macapagal-Arroyo yesterday sent off a 21-member medical team to assist in humanitarian efforts in the poor Caribbean nation.

"Our biggest contribution on top of a meager fund is the expertise of our doctors and nurses and we thank the volunteers who will go there," she said in Filipino in Malacañang.

21-MAN, A4

'Avatar' sinks 'Titanic' in box office sales

LOS ANGELES—"TITANIC" JUST HIT an iceberg named "Avatar."

James Cameron's groundbreaking 3-D spectacle replaced his maritime melodrama as the biggest international release of all time during the weekend and is on the verge of claiming its worldwide crown, which also includes North American receipts, distributor 20th Century Fox said on Sunday.

AVATAR, A13

Trash talk mars august chamber debate

By Michael Lim Ubac

IN THE HEAT OF THE DEBATE OVER the committee of the whole report on the C-5 road extension controversy, some senators yesterday engaged in garter talk.

One resorted to a sexual innuendo, a comment quickly stricken off the Senate records.

Senate Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel Jr. called Sen. Jamby Madrigal an "abused child," while the latter crowed "Corruption! Corruption!" as she pointed her index finger at the minority leader.

Madrigal, the complainant against Sen. Manuel Villar in the C-5 project, earlier called Villar a "coward" for choosing to ignore the committee of the whole's proceedings.

Pimentel objected to the "unfair suggestion."

"[Just to call him a coward ... that's

TRASH TALK, A4

2-hour brownouts in Metro; red power alert in Luzon

By Amy R. Remo

LUZON IS NOW IN THE GRIP OF a power supply deficiency—a problem that is certain to blow anyone's fuse.

Already, the National Grid Corp. of the Philippines (NGCP) has placed Luzon on red alert, citing a breakdown at one of the Sual power plant's units.

As a result, Manila Electric Co. (Meralco) yesterday started to implement two-hour rotating brownouts in Metro Manila and nearby areas, particularly in parts of Marikina, Manila, Quezon City, Bulacan and Cavite.

NGCP said it hoped that, by 9 o'clock last night, the power unit would have been repaired and would immediately go online, restoring normal power supply in areas affected by the rotating brownouts.

Carlito Claudio, NGCP vice president for systems operations, said the red alert status means that the Luzon grid did not have any reserves that could be used to address the emergency power supply deficiency caused by the power plant failure.

Claudio said in a phone interview that the current power deficiency of the Luzon grid stood at about 400 megawatts (MW).

2-HOUR, A13

I'll be your lola, Planas tells Palace media

By Christian V. Esguerra

PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-ARROYO has turned on the charm offensive with a familiar face and a grandmother's love.

The President has recruited Ricardo Saludo, a former deputy presidential spokesperson, in an apparent bid to advertise her so-called accomplishments.

FULL REPORT, A4

5,000 Catholic priests start retreat

By Dona Z. Pazzibugan

BEFORE A LIFE-SIZE CRUCIFIX, THE VENERATED relics of their patron saint, and a Marian image that helped stop tanks during the 1986 People Power revolt, the biggest ever gathering of Catholic priests in the country has gone on a five-day retreat to take stock and recharge amid the growing challenges of their vocation.

With only the very old and ailing unable to attend, more than 5,000 priests from across the nation yesterday opened the Second National Congress of the Clergy

5,000 PRIESTS, A15

CATHOLIC priests wave white handkerchiefs at the opening of the Second National Congress of the Clergy on Monday. ARNULF THEVENET

DENR execs ask Comelec to stop revamp

By Nikko Dizon

KEY ENVIRONMENT OFFICIALS HAVE asked the Commission on Elections (Comelec) to stop using Environment Secretary Elisea Gozun from pursuing his "massive rebuilding" in the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, saying they feared the DENR would be used as a political tool in the May elections.

DENR, A13

Second FRONTPAGE

WEATHER FORECAST

Solon hits Church double standard

By Lolit B. Solivenla

THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN THE PHILIPPINES IS PRACTICING A double standard when it tells the people to choose the country's next leaders by following their conscience, but at the same time it tells them not to vote for those candidates who support the reproductive health (RH) bill, Akbayan party-list Rep. Walden Bello said.

"On the one hand, [the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines] has told [the] people to choose candidates who support the reproductive health bill. There is a double-standard here," Bello said in a press conference.

He said the Church should not blackmail the candidates who support the RH bill in trying to influence their votes based on the issue, which has proven to be very contentious.

He called on his colleagues in the House of Representatives to unblock the measure despite the Church's opposition and its branding of the bill as morally reprehensible.

"What is morally reprehensible is to keep the reproductive rights of Filipinos at the mercy of the Church's political opinion," he said in a separate statement.

"Even if in itself with our awareness that families are condemned to poverty owing to the lack of means for effective family planning! On the other are ruling members of people in the dark because of deliberate withholding from them of correct information?" Bello said.

Bello also lamented that the remaining session days of the House had been devoted to a measure that was going nowhere, specifically the bill to revive the Bataan Nuclear Power Plant (BNPP).

He said the BNPP bill, which has also met with opposition on the floor, has no future since it does not even have a counterpart measure in the Senate.

The House therefore should discuss the reproductive health bill which has been included in three congresses already, he said.

Fine secular line

"In the Congress, we must assert our independence from the Church's opinion and maintain the fine secular line between the functions of Church and state," he added.

Albay Rep. Edcel Lagman, one of the main proponents of the RH bill, had earlier said that he would block the pet measures of other legislators, such as those calling for a constitutional convention, and for imposing new taxes, if the reproductive health bill was not taken up in the House.

The reproductive health bill seeks to promote both natural and artificial birth control methods through government programs.

The Catholic Church hierarchy in the country is strongly opposed to the measure, saying that it promotes the use of the artificial ones. It recommends the use of rhythm and other natural methods of birth control for couples who want to limit the size of their families.

COPW Serving and Protecting the Filipino Consumer

CONSUMER & OIL PRICE WATCH

PGMA MUST RESOLVE BOC-SHELL TAX IMPASSE IMMEDIATELY

There is a looming crisis in the country's oil supply. President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo must resolve this immediately. And defuse what could be a major problem.

The BoC has threatened to seize P43 billion worth of importations of Shell because of alleged non-payment of excise tax on their catalytic cracked gasoline (CCG) and light catalytic cracked gasoline (LCCG) importations.

Shell claims these are raw materials. And are not subject to excise tax based on a 2004 ruling of then Deputy Commissioner for Legal Jose Mario Buñag.

BoC claims otherwise. This time based on a reversal by the present BIR commissioner of the previous ruling.

Meanwhile **local and foreign traders are protesting what seems to be a case of double taxation, and worse, a change of rules midstream.**

Shell has warned of a **shortage in oil supply and the loss of thousands of jobs should their Tabangao refinery close operations.**

COPW believes that an excise tax of P4.35 per liter must be paid on the finished unleaded gasoline before it is sold BUT NOT on the imported raw material catalytic cracked gas (CCG) which still has to go through a refinement process. **WHETHER CCG IS A RAW MATERIAL OR FINISHED PRODUCT MUST BE RESOLVED IMMEDIATELY.** This is the main argument of Shell in its "double taxation" case against the BoC.

COPW will request for a copy of Shell's position on the matter as presented to the Court of Tax Appeals. As well as the position of DOE Sec. Angelo Reyes that there is NO need for the President to intervene. This position was announced by Cabinet Sec. Silvestre Bello III.

COPW will request BIR Commissioner Joel Tan Torres and DOF Sec. Margarito Teves for a copy of the March 24, 2004 ruling of then Deputy Commissioner for Legal Jose Mario Buñag which EXEMPTED CCG and LCCG on the grounds that these are blending components and not finished products.

COPW will have an URGENT meeting with BoC Commissioner Morales to determine that non-payment of excise tax on CCG and LCCG is the practice of everyone in the industry. The BoC has claimed that refiner Petron, global importers Chevron and Total and the New Players are paying the excise tax on their importations.

COPW will study the BIR rulings, Shell's petition with the Court of Tax Appeals as well as the BoC assumptions which COPW assumes as correct and submit its position to the CTA before February 9, 2010.

We want your feedback

DO YOU AGREE WITH COPW'S POSITION THAT THE PRESIDENT SHOULD INTERVENE?

____ AGREE ____ DISAGREE

Text COPW REACT <AGREE OR DISAGREE> to 2910

TEXT NOW!

RAUL T. CONCEPCION
Chairman

Visit the **COPW website**. Log in to **copw.net**

2nd SC justice nixes nomination

By Norman Bordadora

A SECOND SENIOR JUSTICE OF THE Supreme Court has declined being considered for nomination to the Judicial and Bar Council (JBC) for the post of Chief Justice when Chief Justice Reynato Puno retires on May 17.

Associate Justice Antonio Eduardo Nachura has declined JBC consideration, according to Justice Secretary Agnes Devanadera, as did his senior colleague Justice Conrado Vasquez, who is also in the mandatory retirement age bracket.

Earlier, Associate Justice Presbitero Velasco declined the JBC's invitation to be considered for the judiciary's top post.

"He (Nachura) would like to defer to the next most senior (justice)," Devanadera told reporters.

The two most senior justices after Puno are Senior Associate Justice Antonio Carpio, appointed to the high court on Oct. 23, 2001, and Associate Justice Renato Corona, appointed on April 9, 2002.

The JBC has yet to receive their expression of willingness to be considered for the post.

One has accepted

The third most senior magistrate, Associate Justice Conchita Carpio-Morales, who joined the high tribunal on Aug. 26, 2002, has accepted JBC consideration for nomination but on condition that the JBC short-list would be submitted to the next president who is to assume office on June 30.

Velasco, appointed on March 21, 2006, and Nachura (Feb. 7, 2007) are the fourth and fifth most senior justices, respectively.

By policy and tradition, the JBC considers the five most senior justices of the Supreme Court for inclusion in the short list of nominees to be submitted to the President.

It has been pointed out, however, that the JBC is not limited by law to nominating only the five most senior associate justices.

Not necessarily most senior

"Normally they will recommend the most senior [justice], but not necessarily," chief presidential legal counsel Raul Gonzalez said earlier.

The JBC has resolved to start the nomination process but due to the controversy on who should appoint the new Chief Justice, the council decided to defer its ruling on when and to whom to submit the short list of nominees.

The Constitution prohibits presidential appointments two months before an election. Mr. Arroyo's allies believe the position of Chief Justice is not covered by the ban.

Others believe the JBC should postpone its submission of the list until a new president has taken over on June 30.

Cory recalled in bronze, through prayer and song

By Nina Calleja and Jeannette I. Andrade
in Manila and Cathy P. Gomez in Tarlac

THREE CHILDREN OF THE LATE PRESIdent Corazon "Cory" Aquino led the prayers to mark their mother's 77th birthday and memory yesterday.

Viel Dee, Pinky Abellada and Ballsy Cruz, with at least 50 supporters dressed in yellow, prayed the joyful mysteries of the rosary at the Aquino monuments at Rizalita Memorial Park in Pandacaqui City.

Ballsy said her mother's birthday had been always special to them. "It's sad that she's no longer here. But we could still feel her spirit," she said.

She said they kept remembering their mother's presence on her birthday three years.

Viel and Ballsy were each wearing the Cory Brands watch designed by James Zu. Jed de Ayala, while Pinky had on the gold watch Cory wore before she died.

"I took the courage of wearing Mom's watch because I wanted to be closer to her," Pinky said.

Ballsy thanked the people at the mass, sincere saying, "It consoles us knowing so many people are with us."

Bronzed in Manila

The 10-foot bronze statue of their mother was unveiled yesterday in Manila beside a statue of their father, Benigno "Ninoy" Aquino Jr.

"My father, who is from Manila, is now beside my mother," remarked the couple's only son, Jun Benigno "Noynoy" Aquino III, as the unveiling.

University of Santo Tomas student Armand Joseph Villanueva sang Ninoy's song made for his wife, "I have fallen in love with the same woman three times," and a brief hill over the crowd that had gathered at the corner of Roxas Boulevard and Padre Burgos Drive for the unveiling.

In a short speech, Noynoy Aquino expressed the hope that the two monuments would remind passersby of his parents' role in restoring democracy.

Aquino, introduced by former Sen. Franklin Drilon as the "next president," said: "I hope people will remember [Presidents] Cory [or] Ninoy each time they pass by. Let us remember her example, especially now that democracy is imperiled."

He reminded about forty people united to put them to his mother when she died. He expressed hope for the same unity for democracy's sake.

Aquino also thanked the Manila city government for the monument and the unveiling in time for his 77th birth anniversary.

Manila Mayor Alfredo Lim said the two monuments were constructed so one can be reminded of how much they owed the Aquino couple.

"We should always remember the good things a leader has done... so they would be emulated by others," Lim said.

Bishop Leo Drona, Edwardo Cardullo, the artist who rendered Cory's monument in bronze, said: "The whole country wanted a reminder of President Corazon Aquino. I think he gave the best work he could and I could."

Bacolod remembers

In Bacolod City, some 100 cyclists with yellow ribbons and burning scoreyber participated in a "yellow exercise." Yellow ribbons were also tied around posts and trees that neglected the city.

Teresa Regidor-Cuenco, widow of Bacolod Mayor Ramon Cuenco, and Masses and stuff members in the city tolerance of Aquino.

Newly appointed judge of Metropolitan Trial Court Branch 47 of Pasay City, **Hon. Elma B. Yu** took her oath of office before Supreme Court Justice Antonio Eduardo B. Nachura on Jan. 19, 2010. She was a former Assistant City Prosecutor of Manila City for 2 years and a former PAO lawyer of SOR district offices for 3 years. She is the daughter of 2nd Assistant City Prosecutor Oscar T. Yu and Mrs. Elma B. Yu of Caloocan City.

Congress urged: Ratify Freedom of Info Act

WITH JUST FIVE CONGRESS session days to go, a broad coalition of over 300 media, civil society and government organizations yesterday urged senators and congressmen to set aside partisan politics and ratify the Freedom of Information (FOI) Act as a unanimous vote for good governance and sovereign democratic institutions.

In a statement, the Right to Know, Right Now! Network also commended the members of the congressional bicameral conference committee for appearing the FOI bill "feel safe with efficiency and dispatch, but with the responsibility and care to introduce even further refinements" to remedy the weaknesses of respective bills.

"In the long struggle... the days or the hours left of Congress before its Sine Die adjournment are short in duration but long in opportunity," Network said, adding that it should not take long for the two chambers to ratify the bicam report.

"For a few minutes on Tuesday or Wednesday we want to see our senators and congressmen to set aside political considerations that go with the coming elections and unanimously ratify the Freedom of Information Act," the coalition said.

As the resumption of the Congress session on Jan. 23, some 1,000 Network members marched on the House of Representatives to exhort the lawmakers to rally behind the bill.

But if the elections fail, Enrile warns all the "leaders" of the nation to come together and decide the issue of who should serve as acting president.

"Well, if there will be failure of elections—just in case—who should they decide who will become [acting] president of the nation?" he said in an interview over dzBB radio, referring to the Senate majority bloc led by his predecessor, Sen. Manuel Villar.

As republican if there were no elections held, leaders, not just the majority—or the 12 remaining senators [whose terms will end in 2013]—should come together and talk about what would happen in the country.

Enrile said he was making the question because he believed the May '13 elections would push through. "He (Sen) have a plan [for them], as per the (Senate) president in the Senate?" he said.

Over the weekend, the minority bloc announced agreement with the view of Villar, the standard bearer of the Nacionalista Party that a senator not running for reelection should head the upper chamber to serve as acting president in case of a failure of elections.

The Senate President, after the vice president, is next in the line of succession to the presidency because of a temporary vacancy in the Office of the President, according to Article 7, Section 7 of the Constitution.

President Macapagal-Arroyo, Speaker Prospero Nograles and Enrile are all running in the May elections—Ms. Arroyo for a House seat in Pampanga, Nograles for mayor of Davao City and Enrile for another Senate term.

Enrile maintained during the interview that he would not resign since the minority bloc did not install him as Senate President.

Enrile's allies staged a coup and removed the Senate president Juan Ponce Enrile in November 2006.

Then, Drilon, Villar and his group did not elect me to the Senate presidency. I was elected by [group of senators. Only they can take me out if they want to," Enrile said.

Enrile said he would not turn his back on the group that installed him "because I have a responsibility to the Senate majority."

"Now, Drilon, refused to reckon. In a statement, he said contingencies for a failure of elections were for him formed up, and such a scenario would lead to a "political vacuum [because] no proper [one]."

"As it stands now, even the succession plan he made an event appears unclear than ever, especially since Senate President Juan Ponce Enrile is running for reelection," said Villar, reiterating that a nonelection scenario should install the Senate to serve as acting president in case of a failure of elections.

Villar asked the Commission on Elections (Comelec) to say whether it was ready or ready to conduct an automated balloting.

"The Comelec himself said, while they say anyone that the automation of the May 10 elections proceeds as planned to avoid a political crisis that could plunge the country into chaos," he said.

He informed the poll on he noted that "questions on the reliability and integrity of the automated balloting persisted despite the poll body's assurances that it was 100-percent ready for the country's first computerized polls."

The Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines on Tuesday asked its network over preparations for the computerized polling despite the Comelec's assurance that they would be the failure of elections.

As a fallback to such uncertainty, the bishops called for more vigilance and involvement of Filipinos in the electoral process.

With a report from Gil Cabacungan Jr.

Enrile: Issue of succession up to leaders, not minority

By Michael Lim Ubac

AFTER REJECTING CALLS FOR HIM TO step down to preserve the line of succession to the presidency, Senate President Juan Ponce Enrile yesterday asserted that the nation's unresolved election would push through as scheduled on May 10.

But if the elections fail, Enrile warns all the "leaders" of the nation to come together and decide the issue of who should serve as acting president.

"Well, if there will be failure of elections—just in case—who should they decide who will become [acting] president of the nation?" he said in an interview over dzBB radio, referring to the Senate majority bloc led by his predecessor, Sen. Manuel Villar.

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With a report from Gil Cabacungan Jr.

Corrections

IN "ESE: Jan. 23 issue, the third paragraph of the front-page story—"Very memorial shrine unveiled today"—should have read: "Each the marks the country's first statue of Aquino's late hand, Sen. Benigno "Ninoy" Aquino Jr. in Concepcion, Tarlac. He also made the People Power monument at the center of Edsa and the eyed leading to Ninoy Shrine subdivision. The Ninoy statue in Cesta of the People Power monument, however, was made by another Filipino artist."

Missing massacre witness in 'good hands'– DOJ

By Jaster Ojo and Norman Bordadora

POLICE OFFICIALS WERE IN A TIZZY YESterday over reports that one of the star witnesses in the Maguindanao massacre had disappeared from his quarters in Camp Crame, Quezon City.

Philippine National Police Director General Jesus Versoza, in a press conference in the morning, said he had received reports that Senior Insp. Jess Ariel Dongon, former chief of the Maguindanao police mobile group who was detained, a checkpoint not far from where 57 people were massacred on Nov. 23, had left his restricted quarters on Friday and failed to return.

"We have to check on the veracity of this report...we hope that nothing harmful has happened and we will look for him," said Versoza.

Versoza said he ordered the regional director of the ARMM (Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao) and the director of the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group (CIDG) to find Dongon and also account for all the massacre witnesses in the PNP's custody.

It was not until mid-afternoon that Justice Secretary Agnes De Vanadera, in a separate news conference, announced that Dongon was "in good hands."

De Vanadera said the Department of Justice looked into the matter and determined that Dongon "was in the custody of the government." She declined, however, to elaborate on whether he had indeed slipped away from his PNP custodians.

"Versoza said Dongon, one of four police officers taken into custody in connection with the massacre, had apparently asked permission from his handler to leave the headquarters to attend to "personal matters."

Later, Senior Supt. Vicente Winnpent, chief investigator of the CIDG, told the Inquirer over the phone that he was informed "by Glenogon" just now on the DOJ to submit documents" but did not elaborate.

Dongon is suspected to reality to court-martial officials who participated in the carnage allegedly instigated by Zaldy Unday Mayor Andal Ampatuan Jr.

"His testimony is very important," said De Vanadera, whose department has the multiple murder charges against Ampatuan Jr.

Other members of the politically influential Ampatuan clan are facing preliminary investigation for similar charges in the worst incident of election-related violence in recent history.

Studies in arrears can take tests

THE COMMISSION ON HIGHER EDUCAtion (CHED) has ordered colleges and universities to allow students to take their exams even if they had not fully paid their school fees.

Julito Vitriolo, CHED executive director, said the order was issued after different groups, including the Alliance of Concerned Students, have called on the commission to intervene and help parents cope with the economic crisis.

All HEIs [higher education institutions] are directed not to withhold examination results, allow students to take the examinations and release grades of students who have incurred financial difficulties," said the memo signed by CHED Chair Emmanuel Angeles on Jan. 23.

"As such, HEIs shall allow students with delinquent accounts to take school examinations," it said.

"Our intention is to help our students, because of the economic crisis, students and their parents are having a hard time paying school fees or tuition," Vitriolo said.

To ensure that students would eventually pay their school fees, Vitriolo said the schools could withhold their school documents and require them to sign a promissory note.

"The schools have a remedy. They can withhold the clearances of students prior to graduation to make sure these students pay their dues," Vitriolo said.

He said that the order was effective immediately and that students could report schools that have violated the order to the CHED.

"They can report to us so that we could contact our regional office to intervene and require the erring school to follow the order," Vitriolo said. *Philip C. Tubeza*

PROtech 25
Torched and battered for 10 hours, this APOLLO SAFE frustrated pawnshop robbers

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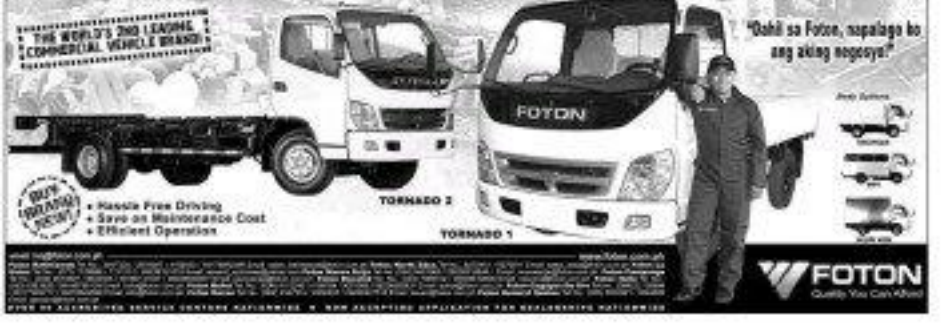
THE DAILY GOSPEL
Tuesday, January 24, 2012
3rd Week in Ordinary Time
Tuesday and Year
1st Reading: 2 Tim 1:1-8 or Tit 1:1-5
Gospel: Mk 3:20-21
The Lord appointed seventy-two more disciples and sent them out by two ahead of him to every town and place, where he himself was to go. And he said to them, "The harvest is rich, but few are the laborers. So you must plead with the Lord of the harvest to send workers to his harvest. Courage! I am sending you like lambs among wolves. Carry no wallet, no sack or bag or sandals; and do not stop at the homes of those you know.
Whatever house you enter, first say, 'Peace to this house.' If a friend of peace lives there, the peace shall rest upon that person; but if not, the blessing will return to you. Stay in that house eating and drinking what they offer you. For the worker deserves his pay. Do not move from house to house.
Whatever town you enter, and they welcome you, eat what they offer you. Heal the sick who are there and say to them, 'The kingdom of God is near to you.'
Commentary
After this the Lord chose another seventy-two and sent them out two by two, to go ahead of him to every town and place where he was about to go.
Daily reflection
We are invited to be humble
of what Jesus teaches.
Do we see ourselves as equal
also when Jesus calls the world to be
nobody is happy, is full of love.



Kenney leaves RP quietly

US ambassador Kristie Kenney left the Philippines quietly on Monday morning, without the usual bustle that used to attend her every move in the country.

Airport employees described her exit as "not like an ordinary tourist's departure."

Kenney left on a Continental Airlines flight at 8:30 a.m., unescorted by airport superiors and photographers.

She was in a shirt and jeans and was accompanied by two house help who carried her two cats, according to Ninoy Aquino International Airport (Naia) public assistant Doris Salamero.

Before she boarded the plane she thanked airport employees and said:

"She left steadily, just like an ordinary tourist," Salamero said.

A staffer in the Naia public affairs office said it was Kenney's choice not to notify the media about her departure.

Kenney was US ambassador to Manila for three and a half years.

She was well-loved by Filipinos for her personal style of diplomacy, but she could also be tough. She showed to the "Pinatay" song on a TV show, but she also made many trips to Mindanao in support of efforts to end the decades-old insurgency there. Mike Cullen

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Villar says he has no intention of facing accusers in Senate

By Christine O. Avendaño

SEN. MANNY VILLAR said last night that he had no intention of facing his accusers in the Senate and would rather go to the people to explain his side in the C-5 road-alignment controversy.

Villar held a news conference in the Senate, a few hours after the Senate adjourned its session that saw the majority bloc slashing him and calling him a coward for holding a no-show.

"I don't want to speak for now. I don't want to be declared open on when I should speak. No one should tell me what to do," Villar said in Filipino.

Villar reiterated that he had been explaining his side to the community for the past two years. He acknowledged at one point that he was tired of explaining.

He said he had given 100 interviews on the matter, issued pamphlets and even brought the media to the controversial road but the other side "did not want to listen."

The senator reiterated that Denis the Menace had betrayed the Senate hearings because he knew he would not be able to go justice there.

He also blamed the Liberal Party for leaking the draft report of the committee of the whole to the media.

Villar, presidential candidate of the Nacionalista Party, said his democratic dredged up the two-year-old issue because his showing in surveys was improving.

He also defended his allies who were called by Sen. Jamby Madrigal "Villar's Express Chow-chow Train."

The senator said he did not think Senators Pia Cayetano, Alan Peter Cayetano, Miriam Santiago, Juliet Ponce Abas Kiram and Ma. Carmen Zubiri were "chow-chow trains."

C-5 report splits Senate

From page A1

Chow-chow train."

Unlike last week when lack of quorum and lack of time prevented senators from tackling Committee Report No. 790, the chamber was able to discuss it because 19 of the 23 senators showed up at the session. (Sen. Antonio Trillanes IV cannot attend sessions or vote because he is detained and is facing coup d'etat charges.)

Like Villar, Senators Panfilo Lacson and Loi Legaspi did not show up.

Before Enrile presented the report he prepared in chair of the committee of the whole, Senate Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel Jr. questioned the Senate for tackling the controversial issue.

Pimentel said what should be taken up was Senate Resolution No. 1472, which seeks to clear Villar in the C-5 controversy in keeping with the "implied policy that the first to be indicted should be the first to be tackled."

But Enrile said the rules allowed that "a committee report is always in order any time."

Pimentel only agreed to take up the committee report against Villar when Senate Majority Leader Juan Miguel Zubiri reminded him that at last week's session it was agreed that the report would be taken up yesterday.

Findings

In his presentation, Enrile summed up the findings of the senators' report which found that Villar had engaged in a "pattern and methodical conduct which he used his position in pushing for the C-5 extension project in the cities of Las Piñas and Parañaque without declaring a conflict of interest.

Villar was interpolated on allegations by Sen. Alan Peter Cayetano "family" Madrigal that he was behind the double funding of the P500-million project and its diversion so that it could traverse and benefit his real estate business.

Censure, return of money

The draft committee report recommended the censure of Villar and the return of P6.2 billion that Villar's companies allegedly gained from the project.

Enrile recorded there was "no double insertions done by Villar."

"But because the government provided P500 million in the budget ... Senator Villar inserted an amendment for the same project and that is irregular and methodical conduct which he used his position in pushing for the C-5 extension project in the cities of Las Piñas and Parañaque without declaring a conflict of interest.

Villar was interpolated on allegations by Sen. Alan Cayetano "family" Madrigal that he was behind the double funding of the P500-million project and its diversion so that it could traverse and benefit his real estate business.

Enrile, then the chair of the Senate finance committee, said he "inserted" Villar P50 million as a P50-million allocation for a project in his home province of Cagayan.

He said Villar had used the money to fund the C-5 project.

It was Madrigal who first demanded on the floor why Villar was not present to answer the charges against him.

Madrigal made the query after Enrile denied the bid of Pimentel and other Villar allies to take up, aside from the committee report, Resolution No. 1472 which seeks to clear Villar of any wrongdoing in connection with the C-5 project.

The senator-lawyers Pimentel and other minority senators for seeking a "series of opposition slap" on the resolution, calling the move "the Villar Express train to be framed on us." Pimentel took offense at Madrigal's statement.

The session was suspended but when it resumed, Madrigal assailed Villar for his absence. "My question is why senator Villar is not here to face the fire. Is it he says that he is not afraid," Madrigal said.

Coward

Stating that there were many "lawyers" on the floor defending Villar, Madrigal asked whether what was happening was a "mockery in the Senate because the accused cannot come here because he is a coward and unable to answer the people."

Pimentel again took offense at Madrigal's remark, saying that there was "a 1,000 and one reasons why a person would not come here because he is a coward, adding which he questioned Enrile for legislating."

"Just to call him a coward is unparliamentary language," Pimentel said. He asked whether the absence of other senators charged in the report also cowards.

Madrigal said if Villar wanted to be president, "he should face the music" and not let "noble senators" like Pimentel defend him.

No leg to stand

Following Enrile's explanation of the committee report, Pimentel yielded the floor to Sen. Alan Peter Cayetano.

Cayetano, Villar's party mate, said the report had no leg to stand on since "all these witnesses" had testified before the committee that Villar was "innocent of the charge of conflict of interest.

"The transcripts says otherwise," said Cayetano, pointing to the testimony of former executive clerk officer of Cabanatuan City Rachel Nad.

Based had said—if asked to execute her report—does sale or piece of property invested by the road had the same zonal valuation of P30,000 per square meter as Villar's "Multi Kinta" and is right of way.

The witnesses also testified that there was no exception, according to Cayetano. "The Office's report said that it was a project of former Villar that the BPWI (Department of Public Works and Highways) officials said it was their project," he said.

He also belied the report's claim that there was a technical error of the original design of the road. Link as it would pass through Villar's properties to increase their valuation.

Minority report

Cayetano-bent proceeded to present Villar's legal defense via Senate Resolution No. 1472, a report signed by 12 senators in November 2009. (Two senators later withdrew their signatures from the committee report and joined 10 others in signing the draft committee report.)

The resolution expressed the sense of the Senate to dismiss the complaint against Villar, clearing him of alleged acts of disorderly behavior because he did not use his position for personal interest and sufficiently to influence public officials in refinancing the C-5 road extension project to deliberately pass through his properties.

Explain documents

Asked what he thought of Villar's absence, Enrile said: "You cannot go against the Court ... If you're innocent and you've established you're innocent you will have nothing to fear."

Enrile said he would like Villar to attend the session so he could explain some of the documents the committee had gathered.

The Senate President said that after the debates, he would push for a vote on the controversial report.

Enrile shrugged off Sen. Miriam Defensor Santiago's opinion that the penalty of censure would require the vote of two-thirds of senators-members-ship.

Santiago said reporters early in the day yesterday that to censure Villar, 16 votes would be needed. "Not neither Senator Enrile nor Senator Villar has a vote of eighteen. So this is going to be a stalemate," she said.

Enrile countered that "those so-called experts have not read the precedents in the country and the US." In the United States, members of Congress could be censured by the vote of the majority he said.

Trash talk mars august chamber debate

From page A1

unparliamentary language. Not as a matter of fact, I'm surprised why we should go down that low in hearing and battling at a colleague of ours. He's still under investigation as far as I know," said Pimentel.

He warned Madrigal to also call the other senators absent yesterday "cowards."

Madrigal said it was a mere "judgment" on her part, but the exchange did not end there.

She mocked the ire of the minority senators when she heralded their "chow-chow train" of Villar.

Abused child

"But did not sir well such Democrat. "If the lady thinks that she can get away with these things here, she has another think coming."

It was remarked that near the gallery rolling with laughter, the minority leader said: "At least, I'm not an abused child."

Insertions

Sen. Alan Peter Cayetano, an ally of Villar, joined in the fray, describing Madrigal, a presidential candidate in the May elections, as a "sailing jeans" (someone, usually a child, who is allowed to join a cruise to be or she would not go).

The senator said Madrigal explained that she had no budgetary "insertions" in the national budget passed by the Senate unusually compared with Villar.

The debate took a turn for the worse when Pimentel used the entire word to constitute on Sen. Pia Rosal defense that he, too, had no insertions in the national budget.

"After your marriage, you will have your insertions," quipped Pimentel, a catcher unsavory remark that drew fiercely ire.

"I demand that that be stricken from the record!" shouted Rosal. "This is an affront to my wife."

Rosal was recently married to broadcast journalist Robin Sanchez.

"This remove it immediately," retorted Pimentel.

At the time, Rosal was debating with Cayetano, who had the floor as he was defending Villar and prosecuting the minority report concerning Villar.

Rosal was defending the Senate majority's decision to prioritize Villar's case since, he said, it was the only one being tackled by the chamber.

Senate President Juan Enrile, for his part, challenged Villar to end the issue by appearing in the chamber.

Cayetano replied that the chamber was "too politicized" to have an impartial judgment on a colleague.

I'll be your lola, Planas tells Palace media

From page A1

To endear herself with the media, Ms Arroyo has 70-year-old deputy spokesperson Ossie Lo Planas who told reporters she would be dealing with them on "a more personal basis... I'll be more like a grandmother to you."

Misleading found in the death of Press Secretary Cerge Remonde an opportunity to replacing Ms Arroyo's tools of communications and rap-and-fall hand in Saludo.

With Saludo's appointment, Ms Arroyo is keeping her multiple spokespersons consisting of Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita, deputy spokespersons Planas and Gary Olivar.

Saludo is returning to his old post after the powerful Commission on Appointments overwhelmingly rejected his appointment as chair of the Civil Service Commission.

But Olivar insisted that the new appointment was not meant simply to "find a slot" for the seemingly unsinkable Saludo.

"No, it's not at all a question of finding a slot for the secretary," he told reporters, saying that Saludo would serve as the Office of the Press Secretary in his concurrent capacity as secretary general of the Reconciliation Commission.

Why so many?

Asked why Ms Arroyo committed so many mouthpieces with only a few months left in her term, Olivar said: "You know the problem with having to face a concerted campaign of innuendos and criticisms from the organized opposition is that you have to put up a formidable messaging organization to speak for you."

Since last week, Ms Arroyo has begun what can be considered a "charm offensive" in the face of her constantly low public approval ratings.

She began by holding a rare luncheon with the Malacañang Press Corps followed by a meeting with the Foreign Correspondents Association of the Philippines (Focap).

Most of the same are set in to follow as the Palace has begun scheduling individual meetings with private media entities, beginning with the Inquirer this week.

Accomplishments

Besides the meetings, the Palace has also started publishing Ms Arroyo's supposed accomplishments since the administration in 2001.

Olivar said the Palace wishes of the services of Saludo—who is known for his "people skills"—"in anticipation" of the possibility that incoming Press Secretary Cerge Remonde will be a better affair with the Foreign Correspondents Association of the Philippines (Focap).

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"If that is the case, then we are going to be really left only with the Executive Secretary as the President's spokesperson, deputy spokesperson Charito Planas and myself," he said.

"So, given the range of things we're asked to do—of which really hosting the daily briefing is just one—I think it is incumbent of the President to bring in someone like Secretary Saludo, who has the experience from his long years in government, to certainly focus on brand issues of governance ... as well as assisting with opposition to the concerns given his previous career in business journalism—outside the country."

Rapport

In the case of Planas, Palace reporters have yet to see her in regular media briefings considered by her predecessor Lodes Fajardo.

Planas told the business that she was still busy doing the rounds of government agencies and preferred to "work behind the scenes," and flares on improving "media relations" with the Palace.

"I won't really conduct briefings. I won't really join the Presidents in her Usec Duo. I'm here to establish rapport with the media on a more personal basis," she said. "I'll be more like a grandmother to you."

Olivar added: "This is not something that Ally Charito has done before as she has to grow up on a learning curve (and) despite what Secretary Saludo will have to go through because of the experience of the secretary." With a report from Anna Lam

Doy Laurel website to

impart legacy to youth

21-man RP medical team off to Haiti

From page A1

The humanitarian team was scheduled to leave last night even as 79 Filipinos, mostly women and children, who were affected by the Jan. 12 earthquake in Haiti, headed for Manila on meeting today under a government-to-government arrangement.

The President had earlier promised to give a $50,000 cash assistance as part of an international effort to help Haiti's recovery. Coming from a poor country like the Philippines, the amount was unfavorably dwarfed by aid coming from the developed countries, such as the United States and Taiwan.

Mr. Arroyo said the Filipinos know the "feeling" of being at the receiving end of international aid in the aftermath of calamities, including Typhoons "Ondoy" "Pepeng" and "Frank" that struck the Philippines last year.

"That's why it is our responsibility to send help whenever we have families and nation (elsewhere in the world who are in need," she said. "We felt the importance of help coming from other countries before. And's why we're doing the same now."

World's goodwill

Sri Arroyo spokesperson, Gary Olivar, said that "we benefited from the world's goodwill when we had disasters last year, so it's but proper that we return the favor. We will use resources (to help) when other nations like Haiti are in need."

Headed by Dr. Emmanuel Bautista, the Philippine humanitarian team has general and/or flegeole surgeons, anesthesiologists, nurses, public health emergency specialists, sanitary engineers, an internal medicine specialist, a pediatrician, a psychologist and a social worker.

Another team, composed mostly of medical experts on post-traumatic cases, will leave for Haiti next week.

"We are going there to help. We have been ordered first and foremost to help the victims," Bautista, an anesthesiologist of East Avenue Medical Center, told reporters. "While as are medicines and equipment necessary for surgical operations — from gauze to antibiotics to anesthesia and anesthesia machines."

"We are not asking for anything in return, not even recognition. This is pure service," he said.

Olivar said the first batch would "send a Philippine Airlines flight for free and take the long route to San Francisco, Miami and the Dominican Republic to get to Haiti.

The detailed PAL for transporting the delivery of the equipment that the medical team would need.

"We should praise our people who are going to a faraway place to help. We wish them the best. We wish them safety because the condition there is not yet totally safe. There are still follow-up missions and the reconstruction and rehabilitation are dangerous work to start with," Olivar said.

He added: "We expect that our missions will be honorable, successful, similar to the record of our peacekeeping missions with the United Nations and our overseas Filipino workers."

Repatriation plan

The plan to repatriate Filipinos in Haiti was approved during a meeting of the Haiti Earthquake Crisis Management Team convened by foreign Secretary Alberto Romulo on Monday. It was submitted to the Philippine Task Force for Recovery, Relief Assistance and Repatriation in Haiti headed by Philippine Ambassador to Cuba Hilarion Gonzales.

Under the plan, all 79 Filipino repatriates will take a seven-hour ride to Santo Domingo in nearby Dominican Republic and will be met at the Santiago International Airport at Santo Domingo in three groups.

The first batch of 46 Filipinos will leave on Jan. 17 for Los Angeles, an Alliance, and take a PAL flight to Manila. The second batch of 22 Filipinos will leave on Jan. 18 straight to Los Angeles, while the third batch of 21 Filipinos will leave for Los Angeles via Miami.

They are expected to arrive in Manila on Jan. 19-20. Eduardo Malaya, spokesperson of Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA), said the repatriation expenses would be shouldered jointly by the DFA and the Department of Labor and Employment.

Malaya, a task force headed by Ambassador Gomez confirmed the safety of a total of 2,127 Filipinos in Haiti. Many of them are married to four non-Filipino citizens. Jan. 16, Jeffrey 46/07, in Pinto and Petionville.

Quoting Romulo as saying during the meeting of the crisis management team, Malaya said the task force monitors "ensure a full accounting of the Filipinos in Haiti, check their conditions and ascertain whether they wish to be repatriated."

Medical mission

Malaya said the hopeons that the medical team was scheduled to leave for Port-au-Prince, Haiti's capital, last night and would be sent at the Santo Domingo airport by Sri Grand Justice Assistant and Philippine Ambassador to Jamaica, Dominican Republic Linnell Dadula.

It will bring 100 tones of medicines and supplies worth P7 million, he said.

With a P50-million budget, the medical mission will last 10-14 days, Malaya said. "Whatever would remain of their supplies and medicines, they will leave behind and donate to the Haiti government," he said.

Filipino peacekeepers in Haiti later presented up a guarantee and help if needed, Malaya said. "Our battalion is welcome the medical volunteers and make their stay somewhat comfortable. Lt. Col. Lope Eugene Bacot of the 10th Philippine Contingent, said in an interview with reporters in Camp Argonaldo in Quezon province on Monday.

"While they can hope for the best, they also have to expect for the worst because the condition here really is dire," Dupey said.

Aryan is a computer applications chief officer one in audio-visual with over the hanover. It also balances medical messaging and video conferencing. While cell phone and telephone communication was still difficult in Port-au-Prince, internet connection can be made through the use of satellite.

Filipino peacekeepers

Relieving and accommodations for the 154 Filipino peacekeepers has been a problem since the earthquake of Magnitude 7.0 struck three weeks ago, Dupey said. In addition to medical to the heroines, he said their three navy barracks fronting Christopher Street, which was flattened by the tremblor, had suffered cracks and erosion, and rendered unsafe.

"Right now, we have to squeeze ourselves into whatever space available left," Dupey said, for sleeping quarters, they were set up "containerized" vans, he said.

There were half-bus can toilet with the dry in cool, he said.

Despite the grim circumstances and initial chaos, the Filipinos continued to be "snappy" during their duties, Dupey said.

Reynaldo commended the Philippine contingent for its extraordinary work in fulfilling its United Nations mandates, particularly in securing the UN humanitarian relief operations, as well as in looking after the welfare of the Filipinos in Haiti.

He paid tribute to the three Filipino peacekeepers—Army Sgt. Dominic Bermudez Jr., Army Sgt. Jeffrey 46/07th Pearly Pantaqui and Air Force Sgt. Jessie Arcocon—and UN civilian staff member Jerome Hayden who died "for the cause of peace and humanity."

Cotonio reported that efforts were continuing to locate Mary Grace Piñata and Geraldine Leitan, who have remained trapped along with other Filipinos and foreigners at the Caribbean Supermarket next to Port-au-Prince.

But Dupey, citing "rumors from other countries," said 99 percent of those trapped in the supermarket are no longer alive." With reports from Jocelyn R. Ey, Alle Calilpo and Anna Leo

HAITI MEDICAL TEAM — President Macapagal-Arroyo reads off the 21-member Philippine humanitarian mission to Haiti headed by Dr. Manuel Bautista during a reception at the Palace Monday.

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Maintain Fealty to the Rule of Law: Let the Next President Appoint the Next Chief Justice

Statement of Members of the Faculty
January 15, 2018

Essential to the existence of a democratic republic is its fealty to the Rule of Law. Any attempt to circumvent clear constitutional text must be justified on grounds of absolute necessity. The need to fill in a lacuna in constitutional text through interpretation must be made on the basis of real needs and not imagined scenarios.

We, the members of the UP College of Law Faculty, are of the firm conviction that the incumbent President cannot appoint the next Chief Justice when the present Chief Justice Reynato Puno retires on May 17, 2018. We do not see any reason why the constitutional provision for the President not to issue any "midnight appointment" in the twilight of her term should not be followed.

The President's appointing power is limited by an express provision in article VII, section 15 of the Constitution, to wit:

> Sec. 15. Two months immediately before the next presidential elections and up to the end of his term, a President or Acting President shall not make appointments, except temporary appointments to executive positions when continued vacancies therein will prejudice public service or endanger public safety.

This provision proscribes any "midnight" appointment made by the incumbent President of the Republic starting from March 10, 2010 to June 30, 2010. The prohibition was conceived to prevent the scrambling as in the case of two past administrations whose acts had to be nullified by Supreme Court decisions.

The only exception is to make "temporary appointments" and only for "executive positions". Even this exception is qualified by the phrase "when continued vacancies...will prejudice public service or endanger public safety."

The position of Chief Justice is not an executive position. The appointment of a Chief Justice is not a temporary appointment. Whoever is appointed sits until her/his retirement at the age of 70 years old or sooner upon her/his resignation. The retirement of Chief Justice Puno, on the eve of May 17, 2018, is well within the period of the constitutional ban on appointment. The clearest textual reading of the Constitution is that the incumbent President cannot appoint the next chief justice.

It has been suggested that the absence of a Chief Justice might trigger a constitutional crisis because it is the Chief Justice that presides over the Presidential Electoral Tribunal and that s/he presides over the entire Supreme Court.

This argument is pure speculation in the light of settled practice that an Acting Chief Justice may be chosen from among the incumbent justices of the Supreme Court. The Supreme Court also does not cease to function simply because it has less than fifteen justices.

The appointment of a permanent Chief Justice by the incumbent President causes more concerns. She has appointed all 14 of the other justices of the Supreme Court. If the sitting Chief Justice will also be her appointee, the countermeasure of the independence of the judiciary may be seriously jeopardized.

It is also argued that the Constitution requires that any vacancy in the Supreme Court must be filled within a period of ninety days. This is not clear from the second paragraph of section 9, article VIII of the Constitution. Even assuming, but without conceding, this to be true, the next President will have until August 15, 2018 or a month and a half to select the next immediate justice. A month and a half is also sufficient time to reflect on who can be chosen as the next Chief Justice. All presidential candidates must by now be considering their next choices of who might become Chief Justice. The Chief Justice is traditionally chosen from among the most senior justices of the Supreme Court.

We therefore find no overriding, logical and convenient reason that would require that the plain meaning of the Constitution as ratified by our people be violated. There are more serious repercussions to the rule of law and the independence of the judiciary if the Judicial and Bar Council transmits a list of nominees for the Chief Justice and if the incumbent President actually makes an appointment. It is like threatened unconstitutional act that will cause a true constitutional crisis.

Therefore, members of the faculty of the UP College of Law,

(1) Urge the Judicial and Bar Council not to transmit the names of the nominees for the position of Chief Justice until after a new President shall have assumed office on June 30, 2010;

(2) call on the incumbent President to exercise restraint for the sake of judicial independence and respect for the Rule of Law and therefore refrain from appointing the next Chief Justice; and

(3) call on our colleagues in various law faculties, law students and our alumni to make their voices be heard on this very important issue.

Assistant Editor Tony Burgonio

Across the NATION

Probe of Vizcaya car-buy binge sought

BAYOMBONG, NUEVA VIZCAYA—A PROVINCIAL official has asked the Office of the Ombudsman to investigate the purchase of 18 sport utility vehicles by the Alfonso Castañeda government without the required approval of the town's supplemental budget.

"The purchase is already a still highly questionable because we do not believe that spending P24 million for SUVs is a priority, but the fact that the appropriation has not been approved makes it even more scandalous," said Board Member Jaime Puerien Dumlao Jr.

In December last year, the town government bought 14 units of Nissan Navara, two units of Toyota Fortuner and two units of Nissan Grand Livina by share from the real property tax payment collected by the province from American Cyanamid Co. Casecnan, owner and operator of the Casecnan Multipurpose Irrigation and Power Project (CMPP), in Alfonso Castañeda, Nueva Vizcaya.

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Alfonso Castañeda received his share of P9.017.5 million of the town's allocation from the total P24 million in special payment of the real property tax obligations.

It, however, did not make sense

INQUIRER

OPINION

Continuity

IT IS UNFORTUNATE THAT A PROPOSAL CALLING for Senate President Juan Ponce Enrile to step down so that the Senate could elect another presiding officer has been entered by partisan considerations. Unfortunate because there is a need to elect a new Senate president as a measure to ensure the continuity of governance in case there is a failure of elections in May.

EDITORIALS

The Constitution provides that "[w]here no President and Vice President shall have been chosen or shall have qualified, or where both shall have died or become permanently disabled, the President of the Senate or, in case of his inability, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, shall act as President until a President or a Vice President shall have been chosen and qualified."

In case of a failure of elections, Enrile cannot act as president because he is seeking reelection and will cease to be Senate president on June 30. Speaker Prospero Nograles is running for reelection and cannot take over as acting president in case of failure of elections. Thus, there will be no one to take over as president until a new election shall have been called and the presidency-elect sworn into office.

It was because of this possibility that some senators proposed that Enrile step down so that a new presiding officer could be elected before the Senate adjourns in February.

Enrile and his allies say that the senators-proponents want him out to stop deliberations on the Senate committee report renaming Sen. Manuel Villar, NP presidential candidate, on account of irregularities in connection with the C-5 road project. Besides, they say, Villar wants to put an ally in control of the Senate to time for the canvassing of votes in the presidential elections.

Proposing an alternative, Senate Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel Jr. said the topnotcher in the 2007 senatorial election could serve as temporary Senate leader, and in case of failure of elections, take over as acting president. In that event, Sen. Loren Legarda, the topnotcher in the 2007 senatorial elections, would become acting president. But then Legarda is running for vice president. So, Sen. Francis Escudero, who placed second in the 2007 senatorial elections, could become the acting president.

To ensure Enrile that there is nothing personal or political in the proposal, both the Enrile and Villar factions should seal a gentlemen's agreement providing that he would be returned to his post if the vote-reflection and audit is clear that there is no failure of elections.

The Commission on Elections has been giving the assurance that there will be no failure of elections in May. But many people are not convinced, given the poor record of the Comelec. Thus, there is a real need to prepare for a possible failure of elections. Government has to continue even if the elections fail. One alternative would be to have Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo continue as a "holdover" President in case of a failure of elections. But we don't think that plan would meet with general approval; on the contrary, it might just spark violent demonstrations and rioting in the streets and give the military a reason to take over the government.

Chutzpa

WE MUST GIVE NEGROS OCCIDENTAL REP Jules Ledesma IV a prize for sheer chutzpa in asking for all his salaries and other emoluments even if the number of times he attended sessions can be counted on the fingers of one hand.

Speaker Prospero Nograles and last week that Ledesma, who has been perennially absent from the House sessions, visited the chamber during the Christmas break to get his salary. A representative claimed a monthly salary of P86,000, plus bonuses, a representation outlay, travel allowances, a staff budget and a P70-million share in the pork barrel.

Ledesma's excuse for this absences was that he was attending to his constituents in the province. But in case he does not know, the job of a legislator is to make laws, and that means attending committee hearings and the sessions of the House where he can participate in deliberations on proposed legislations.

Employees of private companies and governments (personnel) suffer a salary deduction for absences. It is hard to find any reason why congressmen should not be subject to the same rule.

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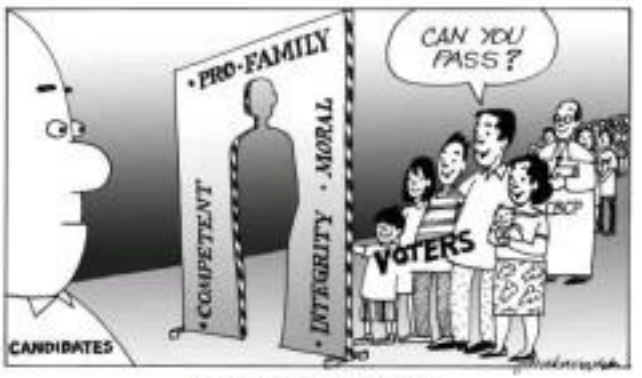

Playing cheapskate

VIEWPOINT

Juan L. Mercado

"DO YOU KNOW WHAT GRADUATION means?" one 6-year-old grandthaughter asked her younger sister.

"Nah-h," replied Jane her, 5.

"Graduation means I won't return to elementary anymore...forever," Jeanine explained. "It means saying only classes, instead, my classes start at 7:30 and end at 3:30."

This kid sees graduation as nothing, not just a rite. Pine. But why did her query flutter across a blue limb?

The lessons earlier published by the now United Nations report, "2010 Education for All." Over a million Filipinos, aged 6 to 11, won't graduate; it says. Over 3000, one-of-school kids "broke through the one million mark... a quarter of those entering school drop out before Grade 5."

The Philippines is a "striking example of an dire performance," UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon notes. "Current policies are failing [to] improve education of the poorest."

Beginning enrollment rates weighed to alongside poorer countries like Zambia, says this interesting report of 180 countries. We lag behind Indonesia and other neighbors.

"Countries, like the Philippines, were as close to universal net enrollment at the end of the 1990s," the 351-report noted. Average in some here is four times that of Tanzania. Schooling remains primary education by 2015 should have been a formality.

Instead, it turned into a rout.

Ms dona Turkey in falling to untangle "problems of deeply entrenched inequalities in access to education." Region in Muslim Mindanao and some outlying islands [are] falling far behind."

The "absence of decisive political leadership" saw the country drift into "real danger" of missing the Millennium Development Goal for universal primary education, this notes. Why? Because we plowed throughout. Malaysia spends 9 percent of GDP for education. We'd think Bolivia can't even do. Sri pump pinch at 3.1 percent, one of the world's lowest rates.

Instead, we lag behind in over the last decade among outbreaks in international Mathematics and Science Tests in the third test, Filipino 13-year-olds came in fourth from the bottom.

Cellar performance prevailed in subsequent exams. "Students from Egypt, Indonesia and the Philippines scored significantly below the international average" four years later.

"Many 15 percent of the government's annual budget is lost to corruption," the dozen-here-frequent think estimates. From the Inquirer accounts of nursing. Only Municipal Social and Inclination to "Sec. Jac" frontliner and ITE broadband, the sources unrolled.

Internal Revenue shortcomings looted from P80 billion in the late 1990s to P205.7 billion last year. But local governments splurged on bonuses, feasts, parties, etc.

Congressmen hurt P1 million each for travel. "Funds embedded in the Department of Public Works and Highways budget alone is P19.6 billion... 16 percent of the agency's budget of P123.3 billion.

This systematic rip-off exacerbates the gap, separating the poorest 20 percent of Filipinos from the rest of society. "Poverty reduction [here] has been slower than in neighboring countries with similar income levels, Thailand and Vietnam," says the 2009 AER report. "Poverty in the Philippines." Hunger has now been in double-digits for more than four years."

"Deep-fault lines" in educational opportunities slice the country. In the ARMM and Zamboanga Peninsula, over 50 percent have less than four years of schooling. These are "second-tier" people.

Poverty is exacerbated by conflict in Mindanao. Remoteness and wider disadvantages are experienced by indigenous people in Eastern Visayas and Zamboanga.

"Who hasn't been conceived by 'graduates' barely able to read, unprincipled in dialect or English, or a less with numbers?" the Cebu Daily News asked. "The world of science, geotechnics and music is eroded off to Outer... And as are 2 in 3 end-any jobs."

"Ang pag-aaral ay gintong yung," an old saw says. Education a true gold. Success won't illuminate to the home to educate kids—and no one is home for the children's homework.

Another, like Family Income and Expenditure Surveys, confirm this folk wisdom. PEI finds that "the single most important contributor to observed differences in household welfare is educational attainment of the household head," former Socio Director-General Ishita Aboitiz writes.

Indeed, there has been no shortage of warnings. One wonders if "2010 Education for All" will be the latest in the inevitable conclusions aired by the Philippine Human Development Report a decade back.

In 1925, Yale professor George Counts already described the basic problems. PHDR noted. By the late 1990s, studies by Leo Magbo, Rosario M. Manasan, Ramon Clarete, Gonzales, among others, documented the emerging "quality deficit" crisis.

"The problem is not about developing studies that can be documented. It is about improving the lives of many people, by better or for voice, are relegated to the public school system," PHDR 2000 cautioned. Basic education "is required if people are to vote wisely, observe the law..., and protect a sense of values and ethics." Ignoring these warnings "paves the way for a failed state."

* * *

Correction: In "Memory of the heart" Oct. 11, 2/21/10 Viewpoint identified the artist of "Open Letter" memorial in Israel as Luis Taruc" Luz at. The correct family name is Bat, not Luz.—Jlm

(Email: jmercado@gmail.com)

Pauper

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

I MADE A COUPLE OF PREDICTIONS MON 25 Drop which turned out to be right for the wrong reasons.

The first was my prediction in 1998 that the best position to run for was vice president. My reason (I did not mean it seriously to any) was that given the exceptional fondness for Miss Label and Jocbon, he might out last his term. The vice presidency would have more than one foot in the door all that time. It turned out to be true for reasons I never expected. Atop only did Joc-Joc win, but not because of Miss Label and Jocbon, but because of the people and their power. An event whose ninth anniversary took place last week, but which CBS, who was especially anxious to downplay its significance, made sure it was not reported by anyone not to make the country remember in 2010.

The second was just half a year ago. That was before Cory Aquino died and Noynoy Aquino ran for president, and everyone was predicting Erap would not be allowed to run. Specifically, people [including several senators I spoke with] thought Malacañang would not allow Erap to run because if he won, he would resist his ground of flesh despite the president and pardon. That's going for the game of saying one thing and doing another.

I said I couldn't see why GMA would not allow Erap to run. (The courts were nothing, it was...and is...a tame of what Cojuangcos, Lobregats I My presume then, as now, though that has been greatly modified by the sea change that has taken place since Cory died, was that GMA wasn't going to stop down, as suggested not least by her State speech which was not the speech of a president saying goodbye.

I said GMA had nothing to lose and everything to gain by Erap running. At the very least he stood to divide the opposition, and with it to disarray. GMA could always count in all cost of intimidators to stay in power, including Chavez things. At the very most, if Erap proved truly resurgent, he could always be cheated, and any attempt by him to stir up public protest could always be met with the same response as "Idiot II," allowing GMA to declare a state of emergency and stay in power.

The landscape has changed completely. Today Erap has been allowed to run for reasons quite unlike those before. He has been allowed to run in the same way that many of the other presidential candidates have been allowed to run. Because it is not worth the trouble to try to stop him from doing so. Because he has fallen in the requisite, or garbage dump, of history. Because he no longer matters.

With the paradigm shift, or the paradise gained, or the paradox cured, that has happened since May, I have come to see Erap's case for what it is: tragic. You do not learn yourself to do something about misfortune.

When history is on him, it will not be kind to Erap. It will not be unkind to him in the same way that it will be so to Ms, but it will not be kind to him in the sense that it will judge, or dismiss, him as someone who had so many opportunities in life but who never seized them. And who never seized them because he never had the courage to use them. Neither history entitled nor humbled gave him the eyes to see them.

The Erap enabled was when he became president. That was a tremendous opportunity to have lived up, if only in part, to the poor he played in movies, the vanguisher with the heart of gold who fought for the poor and who would give to the poor. He kept the pair side of the vanguisher, one with a heart of stone and a yen for gold who fought the poor as much as the rich to give to himself. He had more votes than any president in the country, a position from which he could have pushed for reform, transforming any resistance to it. Alas, he remained only as acting president to the end.

The being handled was when he went to prison for corruption, his conviction taking place long before GMA's courts confirmed the fact. It took place during the impeachment trial by a longer court than the one Filipino Estrada presided over, the court of public opinion, in unanimous like that, a fact that was right. Sigh to epic less, is enough to make anyone look in touch, all it did was make Erap look contrast, to the phantom he once knew and trained for but were now being denied him. That was what made him vulnerable to GMA's demands.

Which is borne out by the surveys. The reason the poor cite for no longer caring about him is that he did not keep faith with them. They would have stayed with him till the end (assuming it was) if he had fought for them, for he just gave in, he just caved in, and for too easily. Not at all Aurora Salonga who would have given two quarters or asked for any.

Why be a benefactor when you can be king? That's one school of thought which he gleefully accepted. But Cassius had Shakespeare to reveal making stronger where once he vanted making mortals. Also, he never understood the meaning of kingship any more than he understood the meaning of the presidency. Like most people who have been in power, he thought kingship probably for one those things as means to an end when for successors was there only as ends in themselves—he never aspired to the dark of confinement the luminous wisdom that says the only kingdom, in reality, you really need to rule is oneself. He, most of all. He could have come out of his presidencies a better man, a humbler man, a contrite man. One determined to make himself a true king by helping to make the things he could but missed done. By aligning himself with the forces of change. By finally giving in a people that had once believed in him the light of hope rather than the illusion of darkness.

He did not. He has not. He might have been powerful once and he might want to be powerful again, but he will never be King. He was, and will always remain:

A pauper.

Senate has to elect non-reelectionist leader

THAT SENATE PRESIDENT JUAN PONCE ENRILE is upset about a rumored plot to oust him—which he attributes to Sen. Manny Villar's camp—is understandable. He's running for reelection and naturally wants to enjoy his presidency as much as possible, and also the trust of which a hearing on unparalleled media fracas. But PNP's pique notwithstanding, the Senate has to move on this point, a fact amidst deep behind-the-scenes maneuvering that is now seeping into the public view. It is the critical need to elect a Senate president from among the senators whose terms extend beyond June 30. This is to ensure that there will be consistent focus for continuity in the leadership of the chamber, a function now claimed by Enrile alone. Expugnas de Novo City Mayor Constantino Jaraula says the fact to breach this unwritten rule: Sen. Rolet Legarda and Ladies senator could conceivably "find Constitutional support" to run to this. It's unquestionable that there be a former president beyond June 30, then expired.

* * *

It's important that this nominee shall a non-elected holdover senator. Why? Because such, then, when they return to the Senate after the May 10 elections, since it is conceivable that they wouldn't have any quorum then former might still be fighting to get into the Magic 12). Sen. Joker Arroyo, for instance, has already run recently and suggested that the incumbent in the 2007 senatorial election set an honorable precedent. But since this respondent here, Senate Legarda, is running for president (proposed presidential bid), Enrile is under no pressure to step down as a caucus. A "respectful" queue of senators lined up outside the door, presumably planning to take a look at the sleeping "patient." I've never been able to attend a wake since work, but remembering the "Buffy Buzz" and the attendant of the situation.

The Super-religious and superstitious might say that the out-lasted O'Brien deserved his premature outing from the "Tonight" show for that one alone, claiming it to be karma. But my cause has no bearing the show "is decade ready," as the pair is fond of saying, and I'm not a conspiracy-mongering and panic among the "suits" when his ratings failed to take off on the heels of the strange decision to retire his predecessor, Leno, and break the tradition of confining the comedy hour to late night. This decision bombed, too.

And here's the "Tonight" host's fate of the helm she struggled with the ratings for years, until his cusp of getting High Gear to gear was after the British talent's knock with a U.S. cheerleader. I do believe that O'Brien would eventually have prevailed against the competition, namely David Letterman. If he had benched about two more decades, instead of struggling to create a separate identity for Leno who was just in the last before him.

* * *

DON'T get me wrong, I think Leno is likeable, and affable. The secret to his success as some with one or string that's nine" in the 45 to morning show of Steve Mazzapoli-Arsenio predecessor and possibly a week or two after June 30, in the event of a failure of the unresolved election. The Senate's new leadership, however, is not that the Supreme Court could also face two crucial issues in that related four or five-week period, for self-serve as appointed? Or not on saving me. Even Chief Justice Reynato Puno has stressed the grave problems the Court could face and the danger of a vacuum. The framers of the 1987 Constitution didn't anticipate this problem, but it's only a problem because it has been politicized, with the well-known Senate position for three-term candidate in the JD., spearing the unbiased answer.

* * *

On this issue Appellate Upelta, a lawyer friend who has been based in Paris the past 30 years but who is in Manila for half of each year, voiced what calls his "unthinkable but profoundly arguable dictum," at this time when "service to country" is everyone's aspiration but with "very little time for decision-making." Arroyo's 2003 appointee Gilbert Teodoro as D.I. Opelta asked, since he's "a real thinker, just like US J.J. John Roberts?." I assume Opelta's "dictum" means Senate his refusal to think that with Ebert's interim he would nominate also "someone and highly qualified Filipino" would just disappear into oblivion after May 10. He idea initially sounded amusing, but after studying the question, I've come to the Court's "it's unsuperable," that if Ebdane were to be appointed CJ he'd be the first has topnotcher since the late Chief Justice Cleofas Bautista. Many jurists since in the top 10, but none was No. 1 in the bar (no kidding).

* * *

Arroyo's camp must be gratified by Opelta's endorsement but also amused, for as he is majority of governors in the Pasyon and pools of Filipinos are concerned, Chief Justice standing up. Also his sister's been a conservative voice, remaining visible, even in colleges and universities and, according to his brothers, in the various campuses he was involved and responsible to such an exception. In Bulacan of which his campus mayor of Arroyo was accompanied by political leaders Dean Cortes and Brendon Bermudez, he invited the students to encouraging concert of Kris Aquino and was 5,000 showed up. He also got the underwhelmed of such intellectual leaders as Bishop Pabillo, Fr. Joaquin Bernas and former UPSC Chief and president of the La Salle University System Rolando Gilera.

In marrying the large student population, Teodoro is repeating what Salonga's famous Salonga did way back in the 1961 campaign, which almost carried her to Malacañang. But then, how many students were able to register for the first election?

* * *

After her gained critical in various forums and campus bash's in Richard Gordon, Pandilo Salonga noted that in his rapid fire acknowledgment of issues, Teodoro just flew through. I wonder if my Pandilang Ate, D.C. based brother Roger Oliveros, who, as a college student, was a close friend of Salonga in the late '50s, had taught the young Gordon Lotte and rhythm in high school, Senate Roger "Lotte" moved to the hallmark of Arroyo classical education, which both Lotte and Angelito Araneta were lately "remastered" and reintroduced to the public. Both did very well, and he can do anything if he puts his mind to it. But his prodigious public speaking and leadership skills did not develop until later, when he was in his mid-30s, a governor and late students. His cheerleader experience developed his showmanship, which is a kind of panacea and he employed was effectively in his Pinoy Big Brother appearance. Perhaps the absolute public PANIC was obviously developed from opposites to his father's service as Pangasinan mayor, but it was probably heightened to a pressure after his father's assassination.

* * *

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* * *

Conan's goodbye

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

"Tonight" won his ability to engage even the "older demographic," that is, people around my age who're still awake at that hour.

But when he finally moved over this TV unit station, every comedy's dream to host, Leno should have simply stuffed away, this same way his predecessor Johnny Carson quietly faded into retirement. Maybe this call of the thing fights may not lead to insist, but his choosing to remain in the network couldn't have been a wise decision. He probably can't have any more room in his garage for one of his cherished cars or memorabilia.

I'm afraid that by this late-night comedy duel-up, Leno emerged the lesser man. Certainly, when the decision was made to pull out this show he had previously declined to take the times for before "The Tonight Show," and O'Brien raised a stink, the gracious and dignified thing to do would have been for Leno to simply say: "Well guys, we gave it a shot, but don't let me ruin on Conan's parade."

Here's that Leno might have left the old job as "Tonight" host. But while O'Brien would seem to be on the losing end of this battle of time zones, he has emerged the better man. I'm mystifying on this space (many thanks to the Huffington Post) the rest of his grandson, graceful final chapter. As the network's top executives are concerned, he has shown how to do it without sacrificing steadfast, angry or vicious. As best as all the way.

* * *

"LEONE NG and this today, a few things need to be said. There has been a lot of speculation at the press about what I legally can and can't say about NBC. To set the record straight, tonight I am officially not saying a word. And what I want to say to this between my time at Saturday Night Live, 'The Late Night Show,' and my brief run here on 'The Tonight Show,' I have worked with NBC for over 20 years. We have had our differences right now and yes, we're going to go our separate ways. But this company has been my home by near of my adult life. I am enormously proud of the work we have done together, and I want to thank NBC for making it all possible.

"Thank you to my fans from 'Saturday Night' to the hardest thing I have ever had to do. Making this choice has been enormously difficult. This is the best job in the world. I absolutely love doing it, and I have the best staff and crews in the history of the medium. But despite this sense of loss, I really feel that I have no choice. Remember, I have considerable means of leaving. The 'Tonight Show' and his seven months. I get to. I did. I'm sure, with people I love, and I do not regret a second. I've had some good fortune this universe I have and if I can until pay it doing a show as a '7-11 catching lot, we'll find a way to remain a team.

"And finally I have to say something to my fans. The massive outpouring of support and passion from so many people has been overwhelming. The rallies, the signs, all the spoof's outrageous sensitivity on the Internet, and the fact that people have moved long distance and camped out all night in the streets in order to see me perform, made I call this unconscious and inspirational.

"To all the people watching, I can never thank you enough for your kindness to me and I'll think about this for the rest of my life. All I ask of you is to keep being, please don't be cynical. Have optimism —it's the best thing for quality and it doesn't lead elsewhere.

* * *

Nobody in life gets exactly what they thought they were going to get. But if you work really hard and you're kind, amazing things will happen."

The color yellow

I WAS BORN NEARLY 10 YEARS AFTER CORAZON C. Aquino assumed the presidency through the Mendiluse Republic Power Revolution of 1986. The event was a major turning point for the nation that I first came to know and appreciate through first-hand accounts my parents shared with me through the years. These are stories that will continue to keep Cory Aquino alive for generations.

As soon as former President Ferdinand Marcos called for a snap election, my father Gilbert Tang (who was then just school to-enter) first mobilized professionals joined to volunteer the National Movement for Free Elections (Namfrel), a non-partisan group whose goal is to ensure that elections are free, honest and orderly. Dad spent several nights taking rolls from different precincts and lobbying up the results, part of a non-violent effort that ultimately revealed the Commission on Elections' true colors. When the Comelec proclaimed Marcos as winner, Namfrel's tally clearly showed that it was Cory Aquino who had won.

The Marcos dictatorship compelled people to band together to protest and call for Marcos' ouster. Together with millions of other Filipinos who can regard as fellow, my Dad risked life and limb to fight for the freedom which Cory represented, and which I enjoy now as being.

My mother, on the other hand, had a chance meeting with Cory Aquino. A few months before the snap election, my mother found herself being introduced to her by Ms. her classmate at Colegio de San Agustin. Cory Aquino had gone to the school to pick up her supervised.

My Mom still fondly remembers that Cory greeted her with a warm smile and had a kind shake. She suppressed my Mom as so unassuming, gentle and humble but. Little did my Mom know that Cory would be occupying the highest office in the land a few months later. And the freedom that were fostered encouraged my Mom to a career in journalism.

Fast forward to 2006, when it was my turn to experience first-hand the blessing Cory had brought to our nation. My little sister Christine and I attended the 22nd anniversary of the People Power Revolution at Club Filipino. We all wore bright yellow shirts and sang the National Anthem with so much pride, our palms pressed just above our hearts. It was the first time I realized that I am a Filipino.

When I went to leave, I had every for me just the first 12 years of my life, with Cory living quietly in a private manner for the most part.

Cory Aquino's quiet love in our hearts. She has gone ahead, and we must carry on with her mission. It is our turn to guard the democracy she had overturned and protected in her lifetime. That is a responsibility we now bear in the post-Arroyo election drama dawns. The moments she has gifted me and my family and the love she has showered on me has now will continue to keep her alive in our hearts forever.

* * *

Angelica T. Tang, 15, is a graduating junior school honor student of the Immaculate Conception Academy in Greenhills. She was named Outstanding Member of ICA's Young Press Club in 2008, and is a double-handed pianist and a yellow belter in Alitalia.

Power-trippers

Rhodil Nitto Bautista

WHEN JOSEPH ESTRADA SPARKED CONFUSION BY HIS PRESIDENCY in 1998, I asked my dad what would happen to the incumbent. He replied, "Simple."

"He goes back to being a private citizen," he told me.

"Why didn't he run again for president?" I asked again.

"Well, he can't. The Constitution doesn't allow that."

"Can't he run for a lower position?"

"Hmm. Technically, he can. But I think it's consistent in his right mind to run for anything else. What for?"

I didn't know then that just over a decade later, an incumbent president would equally be unwise.

Now that President Macapagal-Arroyo can no longer run for president, she has decided to run for a seat in Congress, reportedly as her district in Pampanga, where she is believed to be a super congressional district. Arroyo says that since she's not a congressman, she would try to work her way to the top again by underwriting the passage of a constitutional amendment that will allow her to be elected to prime minister by her political allies (meaning of course she first has to win would-be) and further even if there is a new president there can still up to her.

The idea of the President seeking a lower position, he says, is one that remains vague, is still too difficult for many people to comprehend. It seems to defy reason that someone who has been head of state would settle for becoming the representative of a district. The only possible reason is that she is afraid that as a private citizen she would not be able to exercise any power.

But who wouldn't lose becoming powerless if one were to lose power? With the number of scandals she was involved in throughout her term, Ms. Arroyo's thrash the idea of being just a private citizen when the investigations that she has evaded all these years.

Or maybe she is simply power hungry.

Estrada told Mr. Arroyo to respect the presidency by not running for a lower position and to save that lofty position from being denigrated and reduced to another milestone in a political career that seeks to keep a person unfold on power. But then Mr. Arroyo had for a political comeback that would take him to Malacañang in 2016 as his subsidiaries and chief-executive as his successor's bid to hang on to power.

Estrada's bid is still subject to legal questions. Mr. Arroyo has no easier side ahead of her. Indeed, the only thing that can stop her is her own sense of exhaustion—if she has it, in the first place, of course.

As the country's various positions filled their certificates of candidacy last year, I was hoping that Mr. Arroyo and Estrada would put aside their political differences and drop their political plans. But I suppose that in Philippine politics, nothing is impossible without anyone the rambling power. Made as the Filipino people deserve better governance under better leaders, one political career at a time.

* * *

Rhodil Nitto Bautista, 20, is a journalism senior at the University of the Philippines in Diliman and associate editor of Tinig ng Plaridel, the official student publication of the College of Mass Communication.

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Adulterer, yes; plunderer, no

NEWSSTAND

John Nery

THE DECISION OF THE COMELEC'S SECOND Division to qualify Joseph Estrada for the 2010 presidential election is likely reached on the ninth anniversary of his people-powered ouster from Malacañang, courtesy the Filipino citizens in connection, yet again, the ex-president's rise against the system.

In two recent editorials, the business-directed the distinction between the legal impediments Estrada has to contest the second-time presidency and public perception of his qualifications for the office. The second found that Estrada's citizen experience.

This, the latter, I think, is crucial to our evolving understanding of the democratic project.

Many Filipinos have come to believe that a failed president can serve as the presidency again. But as the first editorial pointed out, the issue before the Comelec was whether the Constitution—not public opinion—set a reasonable and achievable standard for candidates' qualifications running for election. In other words, the notion of "failure" of whether Estrada was a "good" or "bad" president, might not to figure in the legal debate.

So I have come to believe, further, the philosophy of the prohibition, that the prohibition is ineligible for "any reelection," seems clear enough: the drafters put an inclusion of the word "any" reflects the framers' acknowledgment of the potential of the people to choose a successive legal mistake—but still reflects second drafters merely passed the burden of decision to the electorate (in theory) and to the Supreme Court (in reality).

At the same time, I have argued, however, there are in fact many reasons other than the ability to put us disqualify Estrada from running again. Many of those have to do with public virtue, a democratic republic's true foundation—more.

Estrada's most basic qualification for this grave job of us on, well, maybe just one: the chance to that put our thinking on the kind of moments public of office required. I found similar people in the Estrada years, and I've found them in example will be appointed Estrada.

* * *

In an ideal world, political office should be reserved for those of undoubted personal integrity. The familiar example we use to illustrate the point is powerful precisely because it speaks to common experience: A philanderer husband, we say, makes for a terrible political candidate because he would be tempted to use any off the treasury to fund his extra needs. Hence, don't vote known adulterers in public office.

In reality, however, the result hasn't been compelling. Even some of the most distinguished leaders of government alone: Some of the best that is, most effective politicians have been less than faithful to their wives; indeed, to choose just one example, the most contemporaneous U.S. president of the 20th century was the living-and-lovely complex Franklin Delano Roosevelt. He was an artful liar, too. Conversely, personal probity is no guarantee of competence in government, much less of greatness.

But the republican form of government is based on the notion of public virtue. Unlike John Adams' definition but no one: "There must be a public passion for the public good, the public interest. Indeed, Power and Wealth, as the Federalist in the Minds of the People, or there can be no Republican Government—nor any real liberty."

Indeed, Justice's "Kardiya," the prince he fundamental requirement of the Gobyerno, is marked by this same regard for public virtue. The 1986 principle, for instance (cribbed from Filipino life ph. ang, is a very basic opposite on a National Government Commission "kasuklam-suklam" (loathsome) "ang mga tiwali sa tungkulin—mas ang pari kapag pagpipila sa cardit, ang mga hamak na dahohan, mamon ang pagpipila sa mga kalsada at pati sa pari."

Pri can translate this as follows: "The noble-mans please. Doesn't believe in favoritism. One-lawmaker puts civil interests before honors."

To be sure, a strong sense of personal virtue underlies Justice's founding principles. Consider the words: "ang kalay ay dapat ang mga pangangailangan ng mga mamamayan, hindi ang kanilang sariling kapakanan at ang kabutihan ng mga nangangasiwa sa kanya" (the state must serve the needs of its citizens, not the selfish interests of its leaders and the welfare of those who govern it). Or take the words: "Ang pagtatalaga sa mga kawani ng gobyerno ay dapat batay sa kanilang kakayahan, tapat na paglilingkod at kanais-nais na pagkatao" (appointments in the government service must be based on merit, integrity and good character).

* * *

In short, the issue is not that disqualifies Estrada from running in the presidency again is not his moral character; it is his contempt for plunder. That his absolute pardon erased that conviction is legal history—that is to say, it is a construction, which courts may be legal processes, but not moral all respect. If we treat the rule of law as rules of, but.

But the fact that the illegal numbers game running the world's smallest, and impossible to win if the government by the government's people, public conscience opinion is given how a convicted and stock on which he, the President of the Philippines then, tacked a P140-million commercial—that is the fact that cannot be reconciled by the pardon. Only then legal reasoning has been changed.

There moral context remains the same. They prove that the highest office of the land violated public trust. The plea of his own self-interest should of the public good.

All things being equal, I would of course prefer not to rush for an adulterer above me, then, to break the rule's rules, than for adulterers, murders, plunderers, now.

* * *

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Migrante fights on

LETTERS

AS AN ALLIANCE OF OVERSEAS FILIPINO Migrant workers organizations in the Middle East supporters of the detractors of Migrante sectoral party (MSP) to give overseas Filipinos, OFWs and their families genuine representation in Congress, we are saddened by the decision of the Supreme Court disallowing MSP from participating in the May 2010 party-list election.

MSP has the overwhelming support of different OFW organizations worldwide, mostly Filipinos' International members and allied OFW organizations. Thus, its disqualification from participating in the May 224 elections is a big blow to our quest to seek genuine representation in Congress. The Supreme Court ruling was based on a mere technicality in the party-list system law: that underwater the principle of democratic representation.

We believe that MSP should be allowed to participate in the May 2010 party-list election and the reasons for this are far stronger than the mere technicality that was invoked by the Commission on Elections to disqualify it.

Migrante Middle East, in support of MSP vows to continue to fight—in the streets and through other forms of parliamentary struggle—for unity for the OFWs' genuine democratic representation in Congress, but also for our advocacies to advance the rights and welfare of Filipino migrant workers and their families.

—JOHN LEONARD MONTEIRO,
regional coordinator
Migrante-Middle East
jmmonteiro@gmail.com

Educators find A-Teacher party-list wanting

AS THE SCHOOL YEAR ENTERS ITS FINAL quarter, school administrators dread the pickup time more academic year-ender things.

Schools would not mind an increase since here if only Congress had addressed some of their problems.

One problem besetting private schools is the enormous sums being charged by local government units as business taxes—sums school are supposedly for tax exemption. Another is the exclusion of students with unpaid account considered of school fees have yet to be collected from the truancheons in public schools. Some of these scandalous have already graduated from college. A third problem is the inadequate number of small private pre-schools that operate without permit.

Private schools have a natural representative in A-Teacher, Rep. Mariano Piñeiro—some income bulletin, although he can get elected to another term if education were for the country.

Most private schools in Metro Manila were hit by "Ondoy" and those affected wanted for their representatives to help. But they did not even show up. A-Teacher also received pack. Several hands to the mast of about P35-million in P35-billion. We don't know the details, how? He can not show a clear of this perk, but we have the right to ask where the funds went.

Mindanao schools have not fully recovered. My school, St. Nicholas in Palabuan, Marikina, was 20 feet underwater. We lost almost a million and wanted for our representatives. Instead, they are busy campaigning for re-election.

—ALEJANDRO SANTOS RAMOS,
president, Federation of Associations of Private Schools and Administrators (Fapsa)
St. Nicholas School, Barlaan Rd., Barlaan Intal, Concepcion, Marikina City

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2-hour brownouts in Metro; red power alert in Luzon

Front page A1

Meralco said last unit 1 tripped at 12:41 p.m. yesterday after it experienced backwater pump trouble.

Meralco distributes some 900 MW of electricity from the final unit. That facility has a generation capability of 1,215 MW.

Updates from Meralco

Meralco said it would continue to monitor the situation as it assured consumers that it would provide timely updates.

According to Joe Zaldarriaga, Meralco external communications manager, the company remains unsure as to how long it will implement the rotating brownouts.

Zaldarriaga stressed that everything depended on the measures NEDC and operators of other power facilities would take.

Restoration work

Climaco meanwhile said he had received word from the operators of the final power plant that it had already begun restoration work at the unit.

Even before the failure of the Sucat unit, the Luzon grid was already on "yellow alert," which means that it had "little power reserve," Climaco said.

Lack of coal

Hinting at darker days ahead, NEDC said that the 545-MW Ilijan natural gas power plant is currently not able to undertake maintenance shutdown because of the lack of coal supply.

Low water levels

Likewise, the 200-MW Cabanatuan plant is out due to low levels in its feeder tube, NEDC added. The 450-MW Quezon power facility is under maintenance, along with the 600-MW Ilijan unit block B.

Compounding Luzon's power problems are the island's hydroelectric plants, most of which have reported low levels of water.

The 1,000-MW Sual coal-fired power plant in Pangasinan is under up of two units and is currently being run by Team Energy.

In December 1999, the entire island of Luzon experienced a blackout after its "network" problems involving Iran Ilijan Energy Corp.

The 647-MW Sual unit 2 is also out. Climaco said the operators of the Sual plant are forced to shut down the facility's second unit early this month due to a lack of coal supply.

Low water levels

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Aquino years

During the last years of the Aquino administration, Filipinos endured daily power outages lasting up to 12 of them hours. While a report from Cyril L. Bonoberry, Business Research

5,000 Catholic priests start retreat

Front page A1

MORE than 5,000 Catholic priests get hot at a convention center in Pasay City for a five-day National Congress of the Clergy on Monday. The congress aims to strengthen the work of priests as well as define their role in the May 2001 presidential elections. ANTONIO SANTOS

(NCC II) in Pasay City.

The meeting convened the archdiocese in the first congress held almost six years ago, and was expected to grow with the registration at the World Trade Center (WTC) complex still ongoing at press time.

"The basic objective of the Congress is to provide priests with a deep and religious experience that will hopefully lead to a spiritual conversion and priestly commitment. In other words, NCC II is the center of priests, for the priests, by the priests. The aim of the congress is to achieve the interior renewal of the clergy," according to convening's program.

In a message read on his behalf at the opening rites, Pope Benedict XVI reminded Filipino priests "to embrace more than ever the evangelical counsels of poverty, chastity and obedience."

The Pope had declared June 2000 to June 2001 to be Year for Priests in observance of the 150th death anniversary of their patron saint, John Mary Vianney.

"Fervently modeled the Cure of Ars (St. Vianney) to give everything over for the good of his parish, the poor and the sick, done he loved so dearly," said the message delivered by the papal nuncio, Archbishop Edward Joseph Adams, and quoted by Vatican Secretary of State Cardinal Angelo Sodano.

Meanwhile, the is the biggest gathering of priests," said Manila Archbishop Gaudencio Cardinal Rosales, noting their congress goals to spend more time with God, to be more united and surrounded those who come to Rosales for Pope John Paul II's visit in 1995.

"We will be the sight of your life," he said.

Priests need solitude

Rosales said priests, just like members of their flock, also need moments of peace and solitude since they also "go through difficulties" and need to "renew themselves."

The NCC II drew priests representing all 16 dioceses and 18 religious congregations across the country.

The first congress (NCC I) was held also in the World Trade Center in July 2004 and gathered about 4,000 priests.

A Mass officiated by the papal nuncio kicked off the three-day NCC II, with all the priests in white vestments taking part.

An organ and an altar were especially built for the congress inside the WTC, with an image of a crucified Christ serving as backdrop.

The stage also featured a historic statue of the Lady of Peace and Solitude, which Pope John brought to the Immaculate during the 1636 People Power Revolution, the powerful, four-day uprising that toppled the Marcos dictatorship.

Flown in from Fatima, the lady carried an Ati, Aeta, Ifugao Visayan—lay aside and two-story—were also placed on the stage for the opening rites.

The Ati Pearl University choir sang hymns during the Mass.

Tight security

As part of security measures at the WTC, participants and staff members were required to wear IDs. Mobile phones, cameras and bags brought into the venue were also given color-coded tags.

Transferman Capuchin priest Fr. Romeo Catanduanes, the only member of the clergy who had preached to the late John Paul II and Benedict XVI, will serve as the main preacher during the retreat.

The retreat will include prayer sessions and conferences presided over by Cardinalesses, group reflections and journal writing.

For bishops, the priests will have lived families for the duration of the congress.

In his homily Adams cited St. Paul as a model of the spiritual "conversion" awaited to pursue priestly missions.

"Paul makes clear to us that a change of heart is essential not only to become disciples of Jesus, not only to believe in Christ and His Gospel but also to carry out the mission to humanity that God has entrusted to us," he added.

Church services suspended

With most of the country's 7,000 priests in attendance, services in many parishes—Masses, weddings and baptisms—are being suspended for a week or until after the NCC II closes on Jan. 24.

Rosales said an agreement had been reached for parishes in Metro Manila and nearby provinces to have their priests stay those first in the early morning before going to the congress later in the day.

In other provinces, especially in the Visayas and Mindanao, lay ministers have been designated to attend to capsize cases, like the need to give communion or bless the dead, the archdiocese said.

The priests at the NCC II are expected to be back in their respective parishes by Saturday, Jan. 20.

The congress will also be highlighted by a procession on the closing day when all the priests would walk for 1.2 kilometers from the WTC to the Cuneta Astrodome, also in Pasay City, for a Mass.

DENR execs ask Comelec to stop reorganization

Front page A1

In an "urgent petition," the 18 officials—almost all holding the posts of directors—said the DENR should be shielded from partisan politics to "shield the report of the case of former Undersecretary Antonio Joc-joc Bolante."

Bolante is a former agricultural undersecretary accused of misdistributing the share of P728 million to 2,994 officials and aides in his favored by President Macapagal-Arroyo supposedly so they could buy fertilizers and pesticides for their constituents even though it was not in the budget.

The Senate blue ribbon committee last year recommended the filing of plunder and other charges against Bolante and nine others, who denied any wrongdoing.

Take control of DENR

Quinto, in a phone interview, denied his actions were politically motivated and said what he wanted to do was leave behind "a legacy" of honest public servants.

In their petition, a copy of which was obtained by the Inquirer, the complaining officials called on the Comelec to take control over the DENR to "shield the report of the case of former Undersecretary Antonio Joc-joc Bolante."

They cited an environment project in rural areas which, they claimed, the DENR could use to deliver 30 million votes in the coming elections.

The petitioners identified themselves as directors and regional directors of various DENR offices, including the Environmental Management Bureau, and the Protected Areas and Wildlife Bureau. Some were from the DENR central office.

The petition is on the agenda of the Comelec en banc session today. The Comelec may either immediately issue a ruling or have the matter investigated by its law department.

An election 'tool'

The petitioners claimed the restructuring and reshuffle had caused "chaos" in the DENR. They said that several officials, citing an election law prohibition, refused to transfer to their new assignments and that recalled to some of the hearing two people occupying the same position.

"What is more disturbing, and is the main reason for this petition, are the indications that the home of DENR personnel and officials are all designed to use DENR as a tool in the forthcoming election," they alleged.

The petitioners said that in a span of two days, Jan. 7 to 8, Quinto supposedly issued 23 reassignment orders affecting some 100 regular and key officials, including three undersecretaries and eight assistant secretaries.

Quinto also ordered the "abolishment" officers of assistant secretaries for Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao.

He also ousted the offices of undersecretary for special concessionary and external affairs and assistant secretary for social forestry, the latter which he said reassigned to Bolante, the petitioners claimed, could be used in the elections.

18 million votes

They said that if the DENR programs were effectively implemented, aimed to net 150,000 people for forest protection and reforestation.

If each of the 300,000 forest campers and upland farmers would be "organized" to vote as a bloc, they said, they would net 18 million votes in the coming May elections."

The petition said, "DENR should be ripped away from any political activities and should avoid a repeat of the case of former Undersecretary Joc-joc Bolante, Assistant Secretary Rizal Pelagati, and a number of officials of the Department of Agriculture during the 2004 elections."

Quinto: No politics

Quinto, who took over the DENR post only this month after Secretary Leo Montes resigned to run for Manila mayor, denied politics was behind the reshuffle—"It has nothing to do with that."

"I only have six months and I also want to leave a legacy. As an undersecretary for field operations by two years and five months, I know who can be relied upon and would honestly serve the public," he said.

Quinto said he does not "tolerate graft, negligence and corrupt employees of the DENR."

"The more fit to such DENR employees would be a pioneering environmentalist who would eventually oversee their own families and communities by becoming environmentalists," he said.

The deputized would also demand professionalism from them," he said.

Quinto said the petitioners had blocked the number of reassigned DENR officials.

Asked what could be the root of the problem, he replied: "The problem is there is only one position for undersecretary, secretary and there are many aspirants."

Quinto said he had formed a committee to review the DENR structure and clarify the issue on reorganization.

Petitioners

Those who signed the petition were Carlos J. Magno, Region 3 director, Environmental Management Bureau; Conrado S. Dalida, director, Land Management Bureau; Edgardo O. Galeon, Region 4B technical director; Lauriano B. Linguna Jr., Region 2 regional director; Julian D. Amador, director, Environmental Management Bureau; Jose Rito B. Domingo, Region 4A technical director for land; Rogelio T. Trinidad, Region 3 technical director; Raymundo D. Cruzcosa, RTD for forestry; NCR; Ramon M. Ejardon, director, administrative services; and Rolando R. Cacho, chief, personnel division.

With a report from Jerome Aning

'Avatar' sinks 'Titanic' in box office sales

Front page A1

The blue Cogi-owned movie "Avatar" has sold $1.041 billion worth of tickets worldwide making its unbroken 10-week reign, and was a day or so away from surpassing the seemingly unconquerable $1.843 billion racked up by "Titanic," in 1997-1998.

The international promo stands at $1.286 billion, edging the $1.242 billion haul of "Titanic," in North America, "Avatar" may have to wait up to two months to sink the $600 million total of "Titanic," for itself.

Moviegoers in the United States and Canada have chipped in $532.6 million, enough to replace 2009's "The Dark Knight" ($533 million) as the second-biggest movie of all time.

Data are not adjusted for inflation, and "Avatar" ticket sales got an additional boost from premium pricing for 3-D screenings. Imax Corp. said its big screen engagements have sold a record $116 million worth of tickets worldwide.

The biggest movie of all time in North America—adjusted for inflation—is 1939's "Gone with the Wind," with sales of almost $1.3 billion, according to tracking firm Box Office Mojo. "Avatar" ranks No. 26 by that measure.

During the latest weekend, "Avatar" earned $90 million in North America and $147 million from 111 international markets, for outpacing other offerings.

It led the field in at least 29 foreign markets, including France ($12.9 million to date), China ($102 million), Germany ($96 million), Russia ($93 million) and Britain ($83 million).

Apocalyptic tales

In North America, "Avatar" was trailed by the new apocalyptic action thriller "Legion" at No. 2 with $18.2 million, while the Denzel Washington drama "The Book of Eli" slipped to No. 3 with $17 million in its second weekend.

"Legion," released by Sony Corp.'s Screen Gems budget label, cost about $25 million to make, and played primarily to teens, the studio said. Paul Bettany, Lucas Black and Tyrese Gibson star in the tale of an out-of-the-way diner that becomes the unlikely battleground for the survival of the human race.

"Eli," a similarly themed apocalyptic drama released by Alcon Warner Bros. Pictures on behalf of independent producer Alcon Entertainment, has earned $34.5 million after 10 days.

Two other films opened in sixth spot: the Lionsgate/Summit family film "The Tooth Fairy" at No. 4 with a promising $34.5 million, and the Sheraton Pearl medical drama "Extraordinary Measures," at No. 7 with a disappointing $7 million. Reuters

WORLD No. 1 Roger Federer celebrates a point against Lleyton Hewitt.

AUSTRALIAN OPEN

Federer, Williams sisters in Magic 8

MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA—A DOMINANT ROGER FEDERER JOINED THE Williams sisters in the Australian Open quarterfinals Monday while Li Na ensured China has two players in a Grand Slam last eight for the first time.

The World No. 1 Swiss cruised past the hopes of local fans by crushing Lleyton Hewitt, 6-2, 6-3, 6-4, for his 15th consecutive win over the Australian 22nd seed.

It was an imperious display which set up the 13-time Grand Slam champion with an intriguing last eight showdown with the in-form Nikolay Davydenko, who has won their last two meetings.

The Russian ninth seed reasoned he enjoyed alive by coming through a marathon five-setter against Spanish ninth seed Fernando Verdasco, prevailing, 6-2, 7-5, 4-6, 6-7 (5-7), 6-3.

"He's beaten me the last nine times but I'm hoping with the best of five sets play, I can get the better of him," Federer said of Davydenko, while paying tribute to Hewitt.

"I have always had some great battles with Lleyton, he's a champion and has the ability to make you nervous in a match."

Third seed Novak Djokovic, the 2008 winner, also progressed with an emphatic 6-1, 6-2, 7-5 win over Poland's unseeded Lukasz Kubot and will next meet French 30th seed Jo-Wilfried Tsonga, whom he beat in the 2008 final.

Tsonga won a thriller against Spanish 26th seed Nicolas Almagro, 6-4, 6-4, 4-6, 6-7 (5-7), 10-8.

Then Jo's Spanish debuting charm-

RP's Alcantara, partner hurdle doubles opener

MELBOURNE—FRANCIS CASEY Alcantara of the Philippines and Guillermo Cezar of Brazil, ranked eighth, stunned the unseeded partnership of Lee Jeong-moon of South Korea and Masiri Tanda of Poland, 6-4, 6-3, at the start of the Australian Open boys' doubles Monday.

Alcantara was the years last year with Taiwan's Hsieh Cheng-peng, who is no longer eligible in the 18-and-under division.

pion Rafael Nadal. British 30th seed Andy Murray, American seventh seed Andy Roddick and 14th seeded Canet Mikhi Cilic in the quarters.

Like Federer, women's defending champion Serena Williams won a class apart in the devoured Australian Rose Dorton, 6-4, 6-2.

She will play either Belarussian seventh seed Victoria Azarenka or ninth-seeded Russian Vera Dvortsova next in the game for a fifth title.

"It's really good to match my game against her serve, because she's one of the best servers on the tour," Williams said of Stosur.

"It's important when you're playing a good girl to not let the second get run involved or else they'll kill you," she added. "That was the plan, to not let them get involved."

Her sister Venus, seeded six, found the going tougher against Italian 17th seed Francesca Schiavone, losing the first set before bouncing back for a 3-6, 6-2, 6-1 win.

They join Li, Jamie Hsieh, Sania Mirzaza, Maria Kirilenko and 2000 Wimbledon semifinalist Zheng Jie to the last eight.

Venus is in her 11th Australian Open campaign but is yet to win the singles crown, in stark contrast to Serena.

But the elder Williams is not bemoaning herself up about her comparative lack of success, boasting a tougher part of her game plan was starting positive.

She said she could break her frustration drought this year.

"Yeah, I'm ready to go and I feel very good," said Venus, who has won five Wimbledon and one US Open title. She faces Li and after the 30th seed upset Danish fourth seed Caroline Wozniacki, 6-4, 6-3.

Her victory broke new ground for Chinese tennis with the 27-year-old joining compatriot Zheng in the last eight, the first time two Chinese players have reached that stage of a Grand Slam.

Li is looking forward to meeting Venus, who she beat in three-and-a-previous match at the 2008 Beijing Olympics.

"It was a good experience for me, for my tennis," she said of the Olympic win. "But I just want to forget because I play her again. I want to look forward."

AFP

Mavericks hand Knicks worst-ever home loss

NEW YORK—THE DALLAS MAVERicks handed the New York Knicks their worst-ever home loss with a 128-78 crushing at Madison Square Garden on Sunday.

The 50-point rout also gave a Dallas a new franchise record for the largest margin of victory.

Dirk Nowitzki and Jason Terry both scored 20 points for the Mavericks, who played without guard Jason Kidd and center Erick Dampier. Kidd missed the game for personal reasons and Dampier had a knee injury.

"It's hard to even comment on this game. It was so bad in every area," Knicks coach Mike D'Antoni told reporters. "It's regretful, but it happened."

In Toronto, the Raptors eked out a 106-105 victory over the Los Angeles Lakers after Kobe Bryant missed a three-pointer just before the buzzer.

Hedo Turkoglu made two free throws with 1.2 seconds to play as the Raptors denied the game's final five points to claim a ninth win in their last 14 home games.

"I always have confidence," Turkoglu told reporters. "I knew I have been struggling lately shooting the ball but I don't let it get to me. I try to put those behind and try to still play my game."

Bryant (30-101 with less than two minutes to play. Toronto turned to Andrea Bargnani for a field goal and free throw before Turkoglu delivered the winning free throws.

Bargnani scored up with 22 points with Chris Bosh and Jarrett Jack both scoring 16. Turkoglu had nine.

Bryant led the Lakers with a game-high 27 points despite playing with a broken right index finger. He also had 14 rebounds and nine assists but will be disappointed to have missed his most important shot of the game as time expired.

Los Angeles led by 10 points in the third quarter before the Raptors rallied.

"They played some rabid, tenacious defense from about the middle of the third quarter on," Lakers coach Phil Jackson said. "They did a good job of turning the ball over and getting runouts from it."

The win was the 15th in 21 home games for the Raptors this season.

In Washington, the Los Angeles Clippers finally put a long string of road losses and a forgettable season behind them.

On the other side, frustration mounted for the Wizards, who suffered their one more loss in a season full of them.

The Clippers broke the Wizards 92-79 Sunday to snap an eight-game road losing streak and pick up their 20th win, one more than last season's total.

"It just shows you we're a better team than we were last year," said Clippers forward Baron Davis, who had 11 points and 11 assists. Reuters, AP

■ The game between the Phoenix Suns and the Utah Jazz will be shown on Basketball TV today at 10 a.m. (ET) can be seen on Global Sports Cable Channel 80 and Digital 149 on Sky Cable.

DALLAS' Drew Goodon goes for two against New York's Al Harrington.

Miriam trips Poveda, leads WVL tourney

MIRIAM COLLEGE BLASTED SAINT Pedro (Iloilo) College in two sets to show the way in the elementary (competitive) division of the 14th Women's Volleyball League held over the weekend at the Ateneo gym in Rockwell.

The Miriam women posted their second straight triumph after blasting the Iloilo girls, 25-2, 25-12, in the two-division, two-level competition organized by Ben Cojuio.

San Antonio de Padua College also extended its unbeaten run in the high school category to two as it swept Assumption College, 25-11, 25-20; St. Anthony-inDeed O.B. Montessori (Greenhills), 25-22, 15-25, 27-25, and Pearl Harbor accustomed Immaculate International School, 25-23, 25-16.

In other matches:

High school (competitive)—St. James (J. St. Thomas's College, 12-25, 25-11, 25-13; St. Scholastica's College A d. PWU-JASMS, 25-12, 25-11; Hope Christian High d. St. Scholastica's, 25-13, 25-7.

High school (developmental)—St. Mary's d. Holy Trinity, 25-13, 25-13; The Seed Montessori d. St. James College-QC, 25-0, 25-0; St. Bridget & Martin, St. Paul Makati d. O.B. Montessori-San Ana, 25-8, 25-0; Assumption Antipolo d. Ateneo Integrated Academy, 18-25, 25-22, 25-13; Holy Spirit d. St. Scholastica's-Marapuse, 25-18, 25-20; and La Salle College B d. Immaculate Heart of Mary, 25-23, 25-16.

HG Sat Hlaing, chair of the Singapore Youth Olympic Games Organizing Committee; Singapore Olympic Council's Tee Chee Hean, Games CEO Ooi Kee Ngean and Samsung Asia president and CEO Gregory Lee seal their partnership.

Samsung arms Singapore Olympians with cell phones

THE SINGAPORE YOUTH OLYMPIC Games received a tremendous boost with Samsung Electronics' commitment to sponsor the inaugural Youth Olympic Games slated Aug. 14 to 26.

Under the sponsorship deal, Samsung will provide over 5,000 sets of Samsung GT-S5570 (GT-S5570) mobile phones to athletes and key team officials. Each unit will be preloaded with the "Digital Concierge for Singapore 2010" application that will enable users to obtain Games-related content and services.

"Samsung is giving its full support to making the Youth Olympic Games an unprecedented success in Singapore's sporting history," said Gregory Lee, president and CEO of Samsung Asia, during the ceremony signing held Friday in Singapore.

About 5,000 athletes aged 14 to 18 years old, including at least 24 from the Philippines, will compete in 26 events. They will be joined by officials from 205 National Olympic Committees.

Colts rally past Jets, book fourth Super Bowl stint

INDIANAPOLIS—PEYTON MANNING threw three touchdown passes as the Indianapolis Colts booked a spot in the Super Bowl after rallying from an 11-point, last-half deficit to beat the New York Jets, 30-17.

The Colts (13-3) are now headed back to Miami for the second time in four years and to their fourth Super Bowl in franchise history.

Manning finished 26 of 39 for 377 yards Sunday with three TDs. The four-time Most Valuable Player also became the first player in league history to pass for 400 yards in consecutive playoff games. That broke a tie with Kurt Warner and Joe Montana.

"I thought we just kept our mouths shut and went to work," Manning said.

The Jets' magical run ended with their first road loss in six games.

New York (11-6) built a 17-6 lead and took advantage of wide plays. But the Jets lost running back Shonn Greene with a rib injury in the second half, and rookie quarterback Mark Sanchez was shut out over the final two quarters. AP

WCD champ Uy heads NCA derby cast

WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP DERBY WINner James Uy will be among the top contenders at the resumption of the National Cockers Alliance 5-cock-derby today at the Quezon Sports Arena in Pasig City.

NCA Commissioner Tomasa Chua said Ozong Jolo Cruz are also expected to field their best cocks as more in the event to be hosted by Ernst Hepenstrick and Ricky Magtoto.

Other participants are Gerry Ramos and Jorge Torres, Manny and Armand Santos, T. Sevilla, Barangay and Cebu groups and the team of Tina Pete Sera, Jun Soriano and Elmo Sagum.

Perennial winners Casimiro "Ike" Ybañez, Bgy. Iguy Arroyo and Patrick Romero Gonzalez promise to give the field a good fight.

Other weighthing afficionados and NCA members joining the derby are Rudy Alfonso and Jimmy Ang, Gov. Vic Tiap and Helen Roxas, Glen Robert Miller of Riverside Inns, Vice Gov. JV Magnaye, Raul Bicaldo, Danny Tevez, Pendie Buenaventura, Sen. dela Rosa and Sandoy Olano, Rosie Asensio and Boy Allas, Madhangingan brothers, Elbert Cardao, Buddy Jones and Joel Fernando of the Jinsefu group, Tony Machel, Ben Uy, Ridley Reyes, Rolando Tolentino, Bay Bata, Ting and Allan Planada, Ric Ludbig, Ramon Manansalvo, Allan Ilarao, Ricky Valencia, Eugenio Gan, Jory Boko Santos, Rene Medina and Ric de Guzman, Mario Villamore, Sidney delaCruz and the WPJ Group of Makati.

The derby is sponsored by Singapore Complemax.

Wesley draws with Chinese GM, keeps share of 2nd

DAVID

MERCADO

Smart Gilas-RP five ready for Asiad, says Toroman

Mercado, David share player plum

By Jose Navarro

FINE FINISH Smart Gilas team members savor their achievement after finishing third in Dubai. At right is coach Rajko Toroman.

Know how big a Pinoy heart Brian has got

BARE EYE

Recah Trinidad

2nd PBL rookie draft tomorrow

By Jasmine W. Payo

RTU extends Scuaa reign in three events

Smart-CdO, Oro Grande cagers in big NBTC debuts

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ALCANTARA

PSA NIGHT

Albania, So, pool aces head major awardees

By Cecile P. Tapas

THREE'S MORE TO PHILIPPINE SPORTS than superstar boxer Manny Pacquiao and the five female athletes who will bag the limelight in the coming Philippine Sportswriters Association Annual Awards Night.

In their own inspiring ways, the group of athletes made their presence felt in their respective disciplines in different parts of the world.

Among them are female canoeist Jasmin Ann Albania, chess wizard Wesley So and pool legends Efren "Bata" Reyes and Francisco "Django" Bustamante, who stood the country with their awe-inspiring feats last year.

They form part of a big 19-athlete group that will be conferred major awards in the PSA 2009 annual Awards Night presented by Coca-Cola on March 1 at the Manila Hotel.

The awards show will also be hosted by Smart, Pacific Online Systems Corp., the Philippine Sports Commission, Rizal on Centro and the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office.

Pacquiao is to be honored as Athlete of the Decade while long jumper Marestella Torres, billiards queen Rubilen Amit and the world champion powerhouse of Jessa Mae Ortega, Camille Abellon and Jazmin Lagman will share the Athlete of the Year award.

MAFOL

SONSONA

VILORIA

HUETOS

Five world titles

Five pro boxers who won world titles last year—Rodel Mayol, Donnie Nietes, Brian Viloria, Nonito Donaire Jr. and Milwyn Sonsona—also gained the nod of the country's oldest media group, as mainly on merit.

The other major honorees are Jayjay Helterbrand (pro basketball), Elmer Salvador (men's golf), Others Buds (women's golf), Arnel Pesmen (athletics), Ani Calderon (cycling), John Reyben (judo), Geol Manalo and Francis Casey Alcantara (men tennis) and Jessie Bi-Gaan (jockey of the year).

Showing grit and determination, Albania captured gold medals in the 3rd Asian Indoor Games in Vietnam and in the 25th Southeast Asian Games in Laos.

So, the youngest ever Filipino grandmaster, became the highest rated player in the country. He highlighted his 2009 campaign with a remarkable effort in the Chess World Cup, where he tamed former World Men of GM Gashi Grischuk and former world championship contender Vasily Ivanchuk and Gata Kamsky in Russia.

Proving they are not yet over the hill, Reyes and Bustamante were their old magic in September when they grabbed an unprecedented second World Cup of Pool title at SM Mall. The Filipinos, who were the reigning champs in 2006, beat Germany's Thorsten Hohmann and Ralf Souquet in the finals.

Albanians got the country off to a bright start last year when he became the first Filipino to win a ground skate tennis event. He teamed up with Hsieh Chang-peng of Chinese Taipei to bag the 2009 Australian Open boys' doubles title.

The irrepressible Hizonli spearheaded the country's march back to Group I in the Davis Cup and cornered his gold-medal drive in the SEA Games, where he claimed two golds in the men's singles and the men's team with fellow Filipinos Jeremiah Trett Huey.

Meanwhile, the fiery Ronjay Gladiao guard, was adjudged Most Valuable Player of the PBA, while Nietes gave the country another shining moment in the SEA Games when he retired his boxers three gold for the fourth straight time. He posted a new Games record for the third straight time.

Caldoza reigned supreme in the bull-breaking ground Pedrick Drew Tiwa of Christmart. Reyben proved advancing age doesn't necessarily affect performance in bringing home a multi-weight SEA Games gold medal, a multi-weight IBA Games gold medal, a multi-weight IBA Games gold medal, a multi-weight IB

Aplus METRO
Gino Abalos S. Lluisma

DID YOU KNOW

FORMER President Corazon Aquino held her debut party at the Fiesta Pavilion of Manila Hotel.
Cyril L. Bonalaske, Inquirer Research

Boracay Mansion auctioned off today

Sale of Erap property to proceed despite QC government's objections

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

DESPITE THE OBJECTION OF THE QUEZON City government, the Sandiganbayan will auction off today the P142.9 million "Boracay Mansion" it had earlier declared to be part of former President Joseph Estrada's ill-gotten wealth.

Chief Sheriff Edgardo Urieta yesterday told the Inquirer that the long-delayed auction would push through this morning at the ground floor lobby of the anti-graft court.

Earlier, Quezon City Mayor Feliciano Belmonte Jr. wrote the court, asking it to exclude from the proceedings a portion of the property which is being claimed by city hall.

The Sandiganbayan ordered the forfeiture of the 7,145-square meter property right after it convicted Estrada for plunder in September 2007.

But in the letter the court received last week, Belmonte maintained that city's claims were worth through this morning at the ground floor lobby of the anti-graft court.

Earlier, Quezon City Mayor Feliciano Belmonte Jr. wrote the court, asking it to exclude from the proceedings a portion of the property which is being claimed by city hall.

"The Sandiganbayan ordered the forfeiture of the 7,145-square meter property right after it convicted Estrada for plunder in September 2007.

But in the letter the court received last week, Belmonte maintained that city's claims were worth 5,000 sq. m of the property located at 130 16th and 12th Streets, in New Manila, Quezon City.

"We demand that the subject property be excluded from the said intended auction sale," the mayor said.

The city government has been claiming ownership of the property after its registered owner, St. Peter's Holdings, failed to pay P1.7 million in real property taxes.

But as of yesterday, Urieta's office has yet to receive any court order stopping the scheduled auction. Urieta also said two real estate agents had already expressed interest to participate in the proceedings.

Last year, the Sandiganbayan Special Division directed Urieta to proceed with the public auction. But in a report dated March 14, 2007, the court described the mansion as "totally damaged, vandalized and an eyesore to behold."

The mansion was said to be the palatial residence of Estrada's mistress, Former starlet Laarni Enriquez, with whom he has three children.

Records said the family by Dr. Cajimi lived at the mansion for a few months in 2002 but claimed that the property was owned by a crony, businessman Jaime Dichaves.

THE BORACAY Mansion, which used to house former President Joseph Estrada and his mistress, Laarni Enriquez, will be placed on the block today.

Ivler operated on for infection; NBI eyes additional charge vs mother

By Julie M. Aurelio, Jeannette I. Andrade and Nina Calleja

ROAD RAGE SUSPECT JASON Ivler was operated on again yesterday to clear up an infection and close an open wound on his abdomen.

In a medical bulletin issued in the afternoon, Dr. Fernando Lopez of Quirino Memorial Medical Center (QMMC) said the wound on Ivler's abdomen opened up after he vomited.

"Part of his intestines was not working properly so he vomited ... The wound opened up after that so we repaired the sutures," Lopez, the hospital's chief surgeon, said.

Aside from cleaning up the wounds on Ivler's abdomen and back, doctors also rearranged his intestines.

"Right now, his condition is again guarded after undergoing the procedure. It's not a major operation," Lopez said.

Ivler has been confined at the QMMC since last week after he sustained two gunshot wounds during a shoot-out with Senior Officer 4 Rolando Aguilar (SPO4) against an arrest bid.

Hopefully, there will be no more operations needed but we will close his wound from time to time," Lopez said, adding that Ivler would need another seven to 10 days to recuperate.

Ivler was returned to his private room after yesterday's operation.

Meanwhile, the NBI was eyeing the filing of additional charges against Ivler's mother in connection with the shoot-out which left two of his agents wounded.

NBI Office of the Intelligence Services (OIS) executive officer and head agent Nonn Bautista said that Modesta Aguilar might be charged as an accomplice in connection with the charges of direct assault, frustrated murder and attempted murder filed by the bureau against her son.

"She (Modesta) aided her son in committing these acts against our agents," Bautista told the Inquirer, claiming that Aguilar had not only enabled Ivler but also assisted him by letting him know about the movements of members of the raiding team.

He explained that during the Jan. 18 raid on Aguilar's house in Quezon City which led to Ivler's capture, Aguilar had an exclusive and non-constantly on her cellphone.

Bautista said Aguilar claimed she was calling her lawyers but the agents allowed that she made no such call.

"She also made her voice louder each time any one of us went near Ivler's hiding place and called out how many agents were only allowed in that portion of her house," the NBI official said.

During the raid at 23 Hibiscus Drive, Blue Ridge A Subdivision in Libis, Quezon City, Ivler and two other NBI officials, NBI-OIS special agent Ann Lalimo and NBI Special Action Unit (SAU) chief and lawyer Angelito Magno, were wounded.

The National Capital Region of Police Office (NCRPO) yesterday turned over the P500,000 reward on the informant who led NBI agents to Ivler.

During a flag-raising ceremony at Camp Bagong Diwa, the undisclosed informant received the money—part of the P1 million reward offered by the police for the arrest of Ivler, the suspect in the killing of Assistant Prosecutor Rogelio Velasco Jr., the son of Undersecretary Renato Velasco Sr., during a traffic altercation on Nov. 18.

NCRPO Chief Director Roberto Rosales thanked the informant, urging his action "shows that members of the community can do a lot in helping law enforcement agencies like the Philippine National Police and NBI in capturing notorious criminals and other individuals that are in hiding because of pending warrants for their arrest."

CARACOL FESTIVAL
Students dressed in festive costumes participate in the Caracol Festival, Mayaol City's version of the Mardi Gras.

No dump filled with hazardous waste in Manila, says local exec

By Jeannette I. Andrade

AN OFFICIAL OF THE MANILA City government yesterday disclosed there is no dump at Pier 18 of the North Harbor, contrary to the claim of EcoWaste Coalition, an environmental group.

Carlos Bulaong, the city's Department of Public Services (DPS) chief, said the dumping of garbage in the area, which serves as a temporary transfer station, is strictly prohibited.

He explained that garbage collected from households in the city are loaded onto trucks which go to Pier 18. From there, "garbage is directly unloaded from the trucks onto the docked barges" which take their cargo to the Navotas landfill.

Bulaong said that in July 2009, there was a stockpile of 3.6 million tons of garbage at Pier 18.

"Now, there is almost no stockpile of garbage there because the private contractor is not allowed to dump on the ground but to dump directly onto the barges," he said, adding that allowing garbage to accumulate in the area would result in the cancellation of the city government's contract with Leonel Waste Management Inc.

At the same time, he pointed out that the disposal of a large amount of electronic and computer parts was prohibited by the city although there were instances of these types of waste materials ending up at the site.

"The private contractor does not pick up large bulks of electronic waste and the barges does not allow their disposal but some of these materials are often mixed in with the garbage and are overlooked," Bulaong explained.

In a recent statement, EcoWaste called on the government to move swiftly to avert a "full-blown chemical and humanitarian crisis" due to the stockpiling of hazardous waste in the dump.

The group said it found scavengers foraging through the area in search of materials like linear and computer fluorescent lamps, computer circuit boards, and other electrical and electronic items they could sell, despite the chemical risks and hazards these pose to people and the environment.

It added that in letter to the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) on Friday to alert it to the dangers posed by the dump.

It also urged the DENR to coordinate with police for the safe disposal of electronic trash to protect chemical safety and preserve environmental health.

Man files theft, estafa raps vs Bistek, brother

By Julie M. Aurelio

A MAN YESTERDAY FILED charges of qualified theft and estafa against Quezon City Vice Mayor Herbert "Bistek" Bautista and his brother, Boy, for allegedly stealing sculptures belonging to their company.

Carlos de Leon, the owner of CHAM Advertising in Project 6, Quezon City, said the theft took place on Aug. 15 last year.

De Leon, who said he was a childhood friend of the Bautistas, said Heber—along with six other men identified only as Jeff, Benjamin, Pepe, Jhun, Reinhel, Mark and Bobby—took an FV E160 Ill Plus Infiniti Printer from his company.

In his complaint filed with the Quezon City Prosecutor's Office, De Leon said he put up a printing business in 2008 and appointed Heber as the vice president for finance.

Having been friends with the Bautistas for a long time, he said he considered both Heber and Boy his brothers.

De Leon added that while Heber was an official of his company, the latter opened a line in the same building where the printing office was located.

At his landlord and "out of friendship and confidence," the complainant said he gave them the keys to the building as well as the printing office.

De Leon said that before the theft occurred, Boy locked the entrance to the building without his knowledge.

When he called up Heber to ask why the entrance was closed, De Leon said the latter told him that the building was shut because there was no work to be done. Heber also assured him that he would open the entrance to the building the next day, he added.

The following day, De Leon's employees told him that someone had taken one of the printing machines in the office.

He said that when he called up Heber to ask him about the loss of the machine, the latter told him that Herbert had instructed him to it.

The complainant said Heber's reply puzzled him and that he did not take it seriously because he could not think of a reason for Herbert's alleged sudden interest in his printing equipment.

Two days after the incident, De Leon said he learned that some other office equipment, including two desktop computers, three desktop printers, three rolls of turpaulin, five gallons of ink worth P320,000, and five gallons of solvent worth P4,000, were also missing.

De Leon said that although he reported the incident to the police, he did not take any legal action against the Bautistas.

The Inquirer tried to reach Herbert for comment but he did not reply to repeated calls and text messages sent to his cellphone.

Grenade found in men's room in Greenhills

NOEL RUIDERA, A 8-9 janitor, was making his usual rounds at a car park in Greenhills, San Juan, May 30 on Saturday evening when his dog, Billy, sat on the floor of a men's toilet on the second floor.

That was the signal for an explosive.

Ruidera rumored and upon alerting police authorities, the area was quickly cordoned off as the bomb squad carefully examined a suspicious leather-type pouch left on the floor, Chief Supt. Benjamin Mantele, Eastern Police District director, said.

They were it contained a stiffgrenade and found it down with a water cannon. When it did not explode within 30 minutes, the standard waiting time, bomb squad operatives picked it up for safekeeping, Mantele said.

Whoever did it was probably wanted to scare people, he said.

"But it is explode, it has to be loaded to say M-26 rifle. It needs a certain number of tonation before it can blow up," Mantele said.

Senior Supt. Procopio G. Pasia, San Juan police chief, said the explosion could be heard at about 6:30 p.m. But it took until 10:30 p.m. for the police to finish the standard operating procedure for the discovery of explosives, he said.

He surmised that the grenade was not as powerful as an improvised explosive device, and that it had been left in an area which was not crowded.

Mantele said no bomb threat had been reported before the bang was detected.

He said the incident showed that deploying K-9 teams around public spaces was an effective security measure. Ruidera and Billy work for Strike Force Alpha Security Agency. —JVR

MetroBeats

Man killed in fire

A 21-YEAR-OLD man was killed when a fire struck a row of residential and commercial establishments on Narra Street in Pasay City yesterday. SFO4 Pat Cecilio, chief fire inspector of the city's Bureau of Fire, identified the fatality as Martin Medalleda, a worker who was reportedly asleep when the fire broke out. Cecilio said the fire, which started at 9:20 a.m., and reached the third alarm, was probably caused by an unattended lighted candle since the power supply to Medalleda's house had been cut a few days before. Five fighters put out the fire at 11:30 a.m. while investigators placed the damage to property at less than P1 million. —Nikko Dizon

Ex-gov't man's daughter robbed

THE DAUGHTER of a former government official was robbed yesterday morning at gunpoint by a man on a motorcycle in San Francisco del Monte, Quezon City. Lea Marie Jusay, 25, whose father is former Agrarian Reform Secretary Philip Juico, told police man that she was about to park her car inside the garage when a man knocked on and then fired at her car window. Fortunately, she was unhurt but the thief took her bag containing P10,000 in cash. —Julie M. Aurelio

Palace behind money raids

THE RAIDS ON THE MANsions of the Ampatuans for the recovery of a huge amount of money allegedly stolen by the notorious clan from government were ordered by Malacañang, according to very reliable sources in the intelligence community.

Estimates of the stolen money range from P2 billion to P4 billion.

The mostly uncircumcised Ampatuans, who don't believe in the budding opposite, were able to stash away the huge amount from a chunk of the budget of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) and Maguindanao, where they hold sway.

My sources estimate that P1.2 billion has been recovered by raiders from the mansions of Andal Ampatuan Jr., Andal Jr., and Zaldy.

But as to whether the money found in different places was turned over by military and police soldiers is another story.

The reported latest find was P320 million which was taken by police raiders from the compound of the in-laws of Andal Jr.

Earlier, this column reported that P400 million was recovered by Army raiders from the vault of a mansion belonging to Andal Jr. in Shariff Aguak town.

There is nothing wrong if the recovered ammunition were turned over to the government since the Ampatuans allegedly stole the money from the government anyway.

And if the P1.2 billion or more thereof were recovered, they should be declared to the public by Malacañang.

After all, it was the palace that ordered the raids, per my intelligence sources.

* * *

The Ampatuans didn't have the monopoly of stealing from the ARMM coffers, said my sources.

The previous administrators of ARMM, including former Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) Chair Nur Misuari, helped themselves to the yearly budgets of the virtual Moro republic in Mindanao, the same sources said.

You don't need to have proof that the Ampatuans and their predecessors stole from the ARMM.

There have been no improvements in all the provinces and towns embraced by the ARMM since it was formed years ago to appease the Muslim countries in the Middle East.

Billions of dollars and pesos have been poured into the ARMM by our government and the governments of oil producing Muslim countries for its development.

Where have all the monies gone?

The government in Malacañan—from the time of Aquino to Arroyo—knows about the plunder of public funds going on at ARMM, but it has turned a blind eye because it doesn't want to hurt the sensibilities of our Muslim brothers.

The attitude of the government in Manila is to let Muslim leaders steal from their own people.

Anyway, our Muslim society is feudal where leaders hold their subjects in perpetual bondage.

ON TARGET
Antonio Taduyo

That deferential attitude by the government toward the Muslims must stop. Muslims should not be given special treatment.

There's a perception among non-Muslim residents in Mindanao that if you gave a Muslim your finger, he would demand the whole arm.

That perception is exemplified by the Ampatuans.

* * *

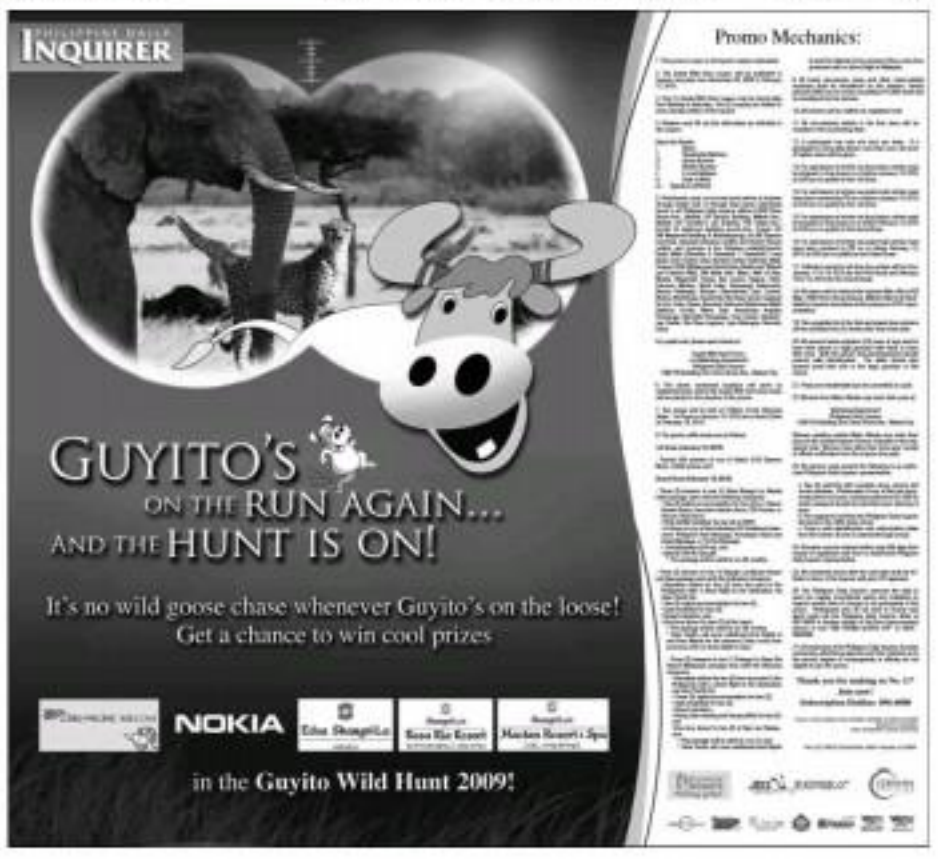
I may sound like a bigot toward Muslims, but I'm not.

The opinions that I've written in this space have been formed over the years as a non-Mindanaon.

But of my childhood was spent in Muslim areas like Jolo and Lanao.

Most Mindanaoans who are non-Muslims share my views.

If you don't believe me because you're from Luzon or the Visayas, try asking a non-Muslim Mindanaon.



Ethiopia plane crashes; 90 aboard feared dead

A RELATIVE of passengers aboard the plane is comforted by a friend. REUTERS

BEIRUT—AN ETHIOPIAN AIRLINES plane carrying 90 people crashed into the Mediterranean Sea en Beirut early Monday just minutes after takeoff from Beirut, authorities said. At least 10 bodies were recovered as rescuers searched the stormy waters.

The cause of the crash was not immediately known. Lebanon has been slammed by bad weather since Thursday night, with crackling thunder, lightening and pouring rain.

Lebanese President Michel Suleiman said terrorism was not suspected.

"Sabotage is ruled out as of now," he said.

The Boeing 737-800 took off around 2:30 a.m. for the Ethiopian capital Addis Ababa, said Ghazi Aridi, the public works and transportation minister.

"The weather undoubtedly was very bad," Aridi told reporters at the airport. He added that the plane went down about 3.5 kilometers off the Lebanese coast.

The Lebanese army said in a statement the plane was "on its descent to an unknown".

The wife of Jean Pierre, the French ambassador to Lebanon, was on the plane, according to the French embassy.

Helicopters and naval ships assembled for a rescue effort as large waves slammed into the shore and rain lashed the coast.

A Lebanese army official said 18 bodies had been recovered.

A police spokeswoman in Cyprus, which sent rescue crews to the area, said airplane debris was found.

Ethiopian Airlines' CEO Girma Wake told journalists in Addis Ababa that he had no information on the fate of those on board or about the cause of the crash. He said the aircraft had been serviced on Dec. 28 and passed inspection.

He also said the plane had been leased in September from GIT Aerospace Gulfs to CIT Aerospace were not immediately returned Monday.

Relatives of the passengers began arriving at the airport in Beirut early Monday, many of them crying and hugging. Officials led them into a VIP area. Lebanese Prime Minister Saad Hariri announced a day of mourning and closed schools and government offices.

The plane was carrying 90 people including 83 passengers and 7 crew. Aridi, the transportation minister, identified the passengers as 54 Lebanese, 22 Ethiopians, one Iraqi, one Syrian, one Canadian of Lebanese origin, one Russian of Lebanese origin, a French woman and two Belgians of Lebanese origin.

Ethiopian Airlines reported that there were 82 passengers and eight crew; the discrepancy could not immediately be explained.

The Boeing 737 is considered one of the safest planes in airline service. The jet was first introduced in the 1980s, and today is the workhorse on many short- and medium-range routes.

Still, over the past 15 years it was involved in crashes of incidents and crashes—many of them stirring and bugging—officials led those

The WORLD

Editor Lawrence B. Greco

Bin Laden hints of upcoming attack

WASHINGTON—OSAMA BIN Laden's usual elusive in the latest audio message attributed to him is seen as a "possible indication" of an upcoming attack by his al-Qaeda network, a US monitoring group warned Sunday.

IntelCenter, a US group that monitors Islamist websites, also said that the manner of the release and the content of the message showed it was "credible" and that it was a new release from the Saudi extremist.

"The Osama Bin Laden audio message released to Al-Jazeera on Jan. 24, 2010 contains specific language used by Bin Laden in his statements to advance of attacks," IntelCenter said in a statement.

The group said it considered the language "a possible indication of an upcoming attack" to the next 12 months.

"This phrase, 'Peace be upon those who follow guidance,' appears at the beginning and end of messages released in advance of attacks that are designed to provide warning to al-Qaeda's enemies that they need to change their ways or they will be smacked," the group said.

In a statement carried by Al-Jazeera television, Bin Laden praised the Nigerian man who allegedly tried to blow up a US airliner approaching Detroit on Christmas Day.

He warned the US that, "God willing, new attacks against you will continue as long as you maintain your support to Israel." IntelCenter said the audio statement "appears to be exactly what it purports to be, an Audio message from Bin Laden." "The manner of release, content of message and other factors indicate it is a credible and new release from Bin Laden," it said.

The source said similar language attributed to Bin Laden was made to a March 18, 2009 condemnation of cartoons depicting the Prophet Muhammad, which was followed by an attack on the Danish Embassy in Islamabad on June 2, 2008.

The phrase was also used in Bin Laden's April 15, 2009 Response voice offer, which was followed by al-Qaeda attacks in Lucknow in July 2005, according to IntelCenter. It said the 11-month lapse could be explained by the "difficulty" in actually picking an attack into operation.

Audio releases were Bin Laden's normal vehicle for statements, with video statements having been very rare since the Sept. 11, 2001 attacks on the US that killed almost 3,000 people, IntelCenter said.

"Consequently, audio messages are the rule, not the exception, and thus speculation as to health or anything else merely because the message is in audio form and not video does not hold up as analytical veracity," it added.

Bin Laden has a $50-million dollar bounty on his head and has been in hiding for the past eight years. He is widely believed to be holed up along the remote mountainous border between Pakistan and Afghanistan.

The last made a public statement where he was quoted on Sept. 28 by the SITE Intelligence Group monitoring service as urging European countries to withdraw their forces from Afghanistan. AFP

Bin Laden

Jakarta eyes dismantling Obama statue

JAKARTA—INDONESIAN authorities said Monday they are considering a petition to tear down a statue of US President Barack Obama as a boy only a month after the former statue was unveiled in Jakarta.

The statue of "Little Barry" —as Obama was known when he lived in the capital in the late 1960s—stands in central Jakarta's Menteng Park, a short walk from the US president's former elementary school.

Critics say the site should have been used to honor an Indonesian and 30,000 people have joined a page on social networking website Facebook calling for the statue to be removed.

Members of the "Take Down the Barack Obama Statue in Menteng Park" group on Facebook say Obama has done nothing for Indonesia. AFP

ICE WEATHER IN BELARUS
A swan spreads its wings on a frozen lake in Minsk on Jan. 24. Overnight temperatures reached -21°C on the day. —

Osama taunts Barack in show of defiance

LONDON—OSAMA BIN Laden took the rare step on Sunday of claiming credit for a failed al-Qaeda attack, but the apparent admission of weakness contained an implicit message of defiance: life can and will carry on more attacks.

That boast—in a Bin Laden audio statement featuring a caustic taunting of US President Barack Obama—might have been dismissed as bluster by many readers a year or so ago.

Bin Laden and his associates are under increasing pressure from US drone attacks on the mountainous border between Afghanistan and Pakistan where they are believed to be hiding.

They face uncertainty from talk that their Afghan Taliban hosts are considering possible negotiations with the Afghan government, a move that might deprive al-Qaeda of safe haven.

Globally, al-Qaeda is a diminished force as an inspirational ideology, partly because suicide attacks on civilians in Iraq and elsewhere have alienated many once sympathetic to its cause.

But the Dec. 25 attack on a US airliner claimed by Bin Laden, and a string of arrests of suspected pro-al-Qaeda militants in the US in 2009, shows al-Qaeda's brand of extremism retains global currency for a dangerous and committed few.

Analysts suspect Bin Laden has felt quite a synergy of wealth, more easily-exploited attacks, supported by globally-motivated hubs of sympathizers and financiers.

Analysts say that while al-Qaeda may no longer be capable of the complex team-based operations epitomized by Sept. 11, it is willing and able to field individuals radicalized as a distance and deployed in "armies of one" against high-profile targets.

Individuals with limited connection or direct support, training or financing from declocentralized units of al-Qaeda or allied groups have shown they are able to pose a real security threat.

Examples include an Aug. 27 2009 attempted assassination of a senior Saudi security official by a suicide bomber; a Dec. 29 Afghanistan suicide bombing that killed seven CIA employees and the Nov. 5 killing of 13 at a US army base by a gunman linked to a Yemen-based preacher.

Even a botched operation can be a success. The Aug. 27 attempted assassination was a propaganda coup for al-Qaeda's Yemen-based affiliate, known as Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP).

The admiration generated by the attack in jihadist circles encouraged recruits to go to Yemen and join the group from countries in the immediate region, transcontinental success soon.

And the failed Dec. 25 attack, combined with the Nov. 5 intelligence failures that lay behind it, caused significant short-term disruption to air travel around the world. Reuters

China firms found selling food tainted with melamine

BEIJING—THREE CHINESE companies have been found selling food products laced with melamine, the chemical blamed for killing at least six babies in a huge dairy scandal in 2008, state media said Monday.

The revelations came ahead of the possible trial next month of chief Chinese dairy executive who are facing charges of producing and selling toxic and hazardous food over tainted milk supplies.

In the latest reported case, authorities in the northwestern province of Guizhou found that the products, said to include "popsicles," contained levels of the industrial chemical above allowable limits, the China Daily said.

One official quoted in the newspaper said the products may have contained tainted milk that was recalled after the scandal but had found its way back in to the market.

The paper said the food companies involved had blamed the problem on milk powder bought from suppliers.

In the 2008 scandal, melamine was found to have been added to milk in China to give the appearance of a higher protein content.

It found its way into a range of products including baby formula, leading to the death of six infants and making almost 300,000 ill, according to official figures.

The scandal triggered an uproar in China and abroad, and many products containing Chinese dairy were taken off shelves around the world.

A total of 21 people have been reportedly executed. Two have been executed and others were given jail sentences ranging from two years to life. Another three executives face possible trial in February.

The China Daily report said the latest discovery of tainted goods included "popsicles" produced by one of the companies but gave no other specifics. AFP

Japan PM: Anti-US base vote 'will of the people'

TOKYO—JAPAN'S CENTER-left Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama said Monday that a local election victory by an opponent of a planned US military base on Okinawa Island reflects the "will of the people." The outcome of the mayoral vote Sunday makes it less likely that a controversial new Marine Corps air base will be built in a coastal area of the southern island on which tens of thousands of US troops are already stationed.

The base issue has roiled ties between Washington and Tokyo since Hatoyama's government swept to power in August, promising a less subservient stance towards the United States and announcing a review of the plan.

Both countries agreed in 2006 to move the air operations of the heavily-unpopular Futenma base from a crowded urban area in a quieter location in the coastal city of Nago by 2014.

Hatoyama, whose coalition includes a strongly pacifist party, has said he will decide by May whether to stick with the pact or move the base to another site, either on or off the island.

The US has insisted that Japan honor the deal, which is part of a wider plan to realign its 47,000-strong troop presence in many countries. Some 8,000 US Marine Corps air force have been based since the end of World War II.

At Sunday's vote in Nago, the anti-base candidate Susumu Inamine, who was backed by Hatoyama's ruling party, beat the pro-base incumbent Yoshikazu Shimabukuro by 17,950 to 16,362 votes.

Hatoyama on Monday told reporters that "the election result showed the will of the people of Nago city," although he reiterated that the eventual government's final decision would not come before May.

Later in parliament, the premier told a lawmaker of the conservative opposition, which backs the original relocation plan, that "I disagree with you that the will of the Okinawan people is to live with yours." The new mayor Inamine, 64, said that since he takes up his post next month he will push for a city assembly resolution opposing the hosting of the new base, until later next month, he said he is not in person to Hatoyama.

The government spokesman Hirofumi Hirano congratulated Inamine on his poll win but stressed that the local election would not prevent the possibility of Tokyo sticking with the original relocation plan.

Japan's media saw the local vote as a litmus test in the base row.

The liberal Asahi daily said that "the prime minister now needs to work his hardest to find a new candidate site outside" of Okinawa.

The conservative Sankei daily criticized Hatoyama for "leaving the backbone of Japan's national security up to the outcome of a mere mayoral election."

Under the 2006 pact, the Futenma base would be closed and its air operations moved to a new facility at the Camp Schwab site at Henoko in Nago, while 8,000 Marines would be shifted to the US territory of Guam.

The base row, and Hatoyama's at times contradictory statements on it, appear to have hurt his government's popularity.

Support for the Hatoyama cabinet has slipped by 6.6 points to 60.1 percent, while the disapproval rating rose 6.9 points to 33.1 percent, according to a survey of 1,200 voters by private broadcaster TBS. AFP

HATOYAMA —

Authors of English fiction in India writing the same old story

JAIPUR, INDIA—AMID THE color and celebration of the major Literary Festival, hosted in Asia's largest, one question has furrowed many brows and sparked anxious debate: Is fiction writing in English in India past its prime?

Given the growing number of publishers and the constant flood of riders in bookstores, the question seems preposterous.

But in hushed conversations in the quaint courtyards and manicured lawns of Diggi Palace in Jaipur, there was a grudging consensus: Fiction writing in English looks all the same.

Much of the recent published works are by young, urban, English-speaking middle-class Indians and are often about young, urban, middle-class Indians dealing with realities, for instance, or the travails of single middle-class working women.

"Authors may well be writing about the world they know best, but the world of all of these books is the same world. It is as if the same novel is being written over and over again," journalist and author Manosh Singh Bal wrote in Caravan magazine.

Bal, who co-wrote "9, Curzon Ambiguity: A Multinational Novel," bemoaned "a lack of ambition and a repeated boredom of theme and setting," in part because authors in their early 30s or younger have been largely shaped by post-liberation India after the opening up of the economy in the early '90s.

"For many of them, English is their first language, the world they move in is almost entirely connected in English, this kind of fiction for repetitive in tone and character," he wrote.

Fiction writing in English in much of the '80s and '90s was defined by Salman Rushdie, Amita Desai, Arundati Ghosh and others who did not live in India. Then came the "diaspora" writers including Jhumpa Lahiri in China, Rumaan Alam in Pakistan, and Vikram Seth in Britain, all writing about life here, even geographically locals, anything beyond the orbits of Mumbai, Delhi, Bangalore.

It is this focus on the same type of reader that is at least partly to blame for the anaemia in Indian fiction, said Amitava Kumar, a writer and Vassar professor of English.

"There is not just a homogeneity in the point of origin, but also in the destination: They are all intended for the same kind of reader. The commonness of theme, of audience-dispensing."

Publishers are also responsible, admitted Ravi Singh, chief of Penguin India, but the best remain tough in a country where average sales for an English novel are about 3,000-5,000 copies at average prices of less than $7.

Publishers are all flirting in the same small pool for the same big writers and opting to grab the attention of the same fickle, price-sensitive readers, he said.

"There is a tendency to be risk-averse, just as in any business, but it can be more damaging in publishing because if there's no variety, there can't be growth," he said. Reuters

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Editor Raul G. Marcelo ● Assistant Editor Connie S. Mariano
BUSINESS

Acer Aspire 4830

Bidding for contract to operate SCTEx fails

BCDA junks proposal of San Miguel-backed bidder

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE BIDDING FOR THE MANAGEMENT, OPERATION AND maintenance of the country's longest tollway, Subic-Clark-Tarlac Expressway (SCTEx)—a contract hotly contested by corporate rivals Metro Pacific and San Miguel—has failed.

Industry sources told the Inquirer that the attempted privatization of the SCTEx contract failed after only one bidder, the Manuel Pangilinan-led Metro Pacific group, was deemed eligible to vie for the right to operate the tollway. But when the financial bid from the Metro Pacific group was opened yesterday, it did not contain the minimum requirements set by the Bases Conversion Development Authority (BCDA), the sources said.

One of the missing requirements was the submission of a commercial letter of credit (L/C) from any of the group's

BUSINESS B2

Moody's keeps 'stable' outlook on RP

By Michelle V. Rosca

MOODY'S INVESTORS SERVICE HAS RETAINED its "stable" outlook on the Philippines, citing the developing economy's financial system and external liquidity that have remained virtually undaunted by the global crisis itself.

A strong external payments position and stable financial system provide time for the government to return to a path of fiscal consolidation, after the effects of the global economic downturn," Moody's said in its latest report entitled "Asia Pacific Outlook."

The credit rating firm said the Philippines was one of the better performers in the Asia-Pacific region as far as keeping considerable external liquidity was concerned.

The Philippines' rating from Moody's is Ba2, or three notches below investment grade. It was raised by a notch in July last year from B1.

The "stable" outlook indicated that the country's credit rating would not likely be downgraded, or upgraded, within the short term.

The Philippines ended 2009 with an all-time high gross international reserves (GIR) of $40 billion, up from $37.5 billion in 2008, even as global economic activity ended last year.

The GIR, the total sum of foreign currency reserves managed by the central bank, indicates the country's ability to buy imported goods, settle debts denominated in foreign currencies, and engage in other forms of commercial transactions with the rest of the world.

Given the country's record foreign ex-

MOODY'S B2

Indicators

Currencies

AS OF JAN 25

PESO-DOLLAR RATE

₱ 46.210 = $ 1

As of p.m. Jan. 25, 2010

¥ 50.69 = $ 1

As of p.m. Jan. 25, 2010

Stock Market

PSE COMPOSITE INDEX

Stocks extend losing streak

LOCAL STOCKS EXTENDED THEIR LOSING streak to break through a key barrier at 3,800 yesterday as the high global risk environment soon profit-taking.

The main index Philippine Stock Exchange index shed another 69.51 points or 1.84 percent to close at 3,861.96 on a broad-based selloff that was widely attributed to investors locking in gains from being relatively in the United States and China.

The slump at the local bourse was led by the mining and oil, industrial, holding firms and financial sectors, which price down 2.8 percent, 2.7 percent, 2.1 percent and 1.57 percent, respectively. Value by more annualized to ₱3.7 billion.

Local stocks took the cue from the gloomy sentiment in Wall Street over the German ranks. All stocks declined for a second week in post their steepest fall since October as banks plunged on a White House proposal to limit financial risk and China moved to cool economic growth.

With the key support at 3,800 now breached in the local market, BDO Unibank chief economist Jonathan Ravelas has predicted more weakness toward 3,800. And he said the range between 3,790 and 3,800 should be more attractive to those anchoring on the

BUSINESS B2

RCBC plans to raise $150M from overseas debt offering

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE YUCHENGCO SEAL-CONTROLLED Rizal Commercial Banking Corp. may be the first Philippine bank to tap the capital markets this year with a proposed offering of about $150 million or US dollar-denominated debt.

Industry sources yesterday said the commercial bank, the seventh largest in the country in terms of assets, had mandated foreign banks Standard Chartered and Citibank to join lead managers for the overseas debt issuance targeted for launching by February.

StanChart, Citi to handle issue

Bank officials plan to go on an investor roadshow for the offering. While the proposed issuance, RCBC will likewise be the first Philippine issuer to tap the overseas market this year.

The bank's board was scheduled to discuss the terms of the proposed overseas debt offering late yesterday. An official announcement is expected today.

The last time RCBC tapped the capital market was in May last year with the issuance of $4 billion in five-year unsecured debt under breaking a coupon rate of 7.75% percent. The notes have a maturity of 10 years with a call option at the end of the fifth year and subject to higher interest rates if the option is not exercised. In October last year, free access of lower tier 2 notes worth a total of P11 billion were listed on the listed income exchange Philippine Dealing and Exchange Corp.

RCBC had consolidated assets of P207.07 billion as of end-September last year.

DBP profit up 70% in 2009

By Michelle V. Rosca

DEVELOPMENT BANK OF THE Philippines yesterday reported a 70 percent surge in 2009 net earnings to P6.09 billion from P3.6 billion the year before, crediting up prudent lending and investments even while the global economy was suffering from a turmoil.

Reynaldo David, president of DBP and the government-run bank registered a net income of P6.09 billion last year, up 70 percent from only P3.6 billion in 2008.

"DBP financed many infrastructure and logistics projects that resolve mainly on projects that enhanced trade and efficiency in farm-to-market activities," DBP president Reynaldo David said in a speech at the bank's 62nd anniversary celebration yesterday.

The increase in net income came with the rise in the bank's assets to P329.2 billion from P243.23 billion in 2008.

David said that growth in profitability DBP was able to earmark P3.5 billion for the national government in dividend contribution for 2009. This brought the total dividends paid by DBP to the government to P11.4 billion since 2004.

David said DBP invested in projects that connected the country's islands by establishing 20 additional roll-on, roll-off (RoRo) routes. The were funded through the financing of vessels and port facilities.

He said the bank also invested in power and environment-related projects.

"We [DBP] will continue to maintain our investment through intermediary financing of major infrastructure [projects]," David said.

The bank's total outstanding loans as of end-2009 stood at P197 billion, of the amount, P13.42 billion was used to finance RoRo projects while P6.1 billion was accounted for by loans for renewable energy development and other environment-protection projects.

The bank's outstanding loans for micro, small and medium enterprises amounted to P16.9 billion.

State-owned banks were mandated to help develop the country's SME sector, which accounts for more than 90 percent of the country's business sector.

Together with state-run Land Bank of the Philippines, DBP acquired an 80-percent share in Metro Rail Transit Corp. to help the government save money from the guaranteed payment to the former operator of the mass transport system.

Bidding . . .

Turn to page B3

bankers that would have provided an irrevocable payment undertaking. The source said, adding that the Metro Pacific group had also proposed semi-annual payments that were much lower than the BCDA requirement.

The BCDA-chair declined to the only other company that has pledged the Metro Pacific group. The proposal submitted by North Luzon Toll Management Inc., a company backed by diversifying conglomerate San Miguel Corp. and first Tollways Corp., was not opened at all due to certain technicalities questioning the concern said.

Bernal said the withdrawal the San Miguel-led group from the bidding, the BCDA considered the "swiss account" definition set by North Link in its eligibility documents as unacceptable. The source said. The government corporation justified an explanation from North Link. But it refused to dwell when it used the "swiss account" definition in the document would be made by today.

Metro Pacific Tollways Corp., a unit of Integrated Micro-Electronics Inc.'s Metro Pacific Corp., and San Miguel-backed North Luzon Tollways Inc. the only groups that filed eligibility documents with the BCDA within the Jan. 4, 2010, deadline.

The Metro Pacific subsidiary earlier submitted an unsolicited proposal to take over a long stretch of segments of NLTEx. But the BCDA decided to bid out the contract instead, purportedly to relieve itself of the hefty project cost of the large infrastructure project. — **With a report from Abigail L. Antonio**

Award-winning Vehicles Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow

Kia Motors looks to 2010 with confidence

With 2009 left behind, Kia Motors is grateful for the growing number of consumers around the world who are taking a second look at this year's efforts to their great value, reliability and quality, not to mention their quality improved design and performance. Across the board, a number of segment-defined models are being introduced more often.

Accolades in Kia's extensive line-up of vehicles.

In the US, the Kia Forte was named "Car of the Year" by MotorAuthority.com, a web magazine online automotive source, for its attractive styling, value and performance for class-leading features. According to Michael Sprague, Vice President, Marketing of Kia Motors America, "Consumers do not as dealers have come to recognize the Kia Motors brand for delivering affordable, high-quality vehicles. Now, our customers are enthusiastic as they are impressed with the Kia Sorento, naming it Truck of the Year after its impressive performance in the market. Today, Kia Motors Corporation signs for this Motors New Zealand, said, "The all-new Sorento is likely to be the first of many from the Kia stable to win top awards in the future."

Meanwhile, the Chilean automotive media selected the Morning as "The Best Brand of the Year."

While the Soul was recognized as "Best Car 2009." Out of eight total categories, Kia was nominated for four and won the two most prestigious. These awards are a true testimony of the tremendous strides the Kia brand has made in Chile, where it now holds a 10% share of the total market.

With the complete regeneration of its product line-up continuing through 2010, Kia fans around the world can expect even better things in the New Year and beyond.

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Moody's keeps . . .

Turn to page B3

change reviews. Moody's said the Philippine government would not be forced to borrow [illegible] to cover its external liquidity-related vulnerabilities.

Moody's said it expected the country's economy, measured by the gross domestic product, to grow 3 percent this year, rebounding from an estimated contraction of 1 percent last year.

The growth forecast for the country was consistent with the projected growth for the [illegible] Pacific region of 4.9 percent this year, notwithstanding [illegible] 1.2 percent last year.

Moody's said most of the countries in the region would rebound this year due to improved demand for their exports as [illegible] economies recover from a recession.

The Philippines outperformed many of its neighbors in 2009, escaping a recession and growing by 0.9 percent in the first three quarters of last year.

Nonetheless, Moody's said growth of other countries would likely outpace that of the Philippines this year.

The credit rating firm expected Malaysia to grow 4.2 percent for 2010, Thailand, 3.5 percent, Indonesia, 5.7 percent, Indonesia, 5.6 percent, and Cambodia, 5 percent.

Stocks extend losing streak

Turn to page B3

Three more PH decliners as against only 18 advancers and 48 unchanged stocks in the local stock market. The most heavily weighted stocks were those of Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co., Energy Development Corp., Bank of the Philippine Islands, Ayala Land Inc., and First Philippine Holdings Corp.

Among the few issues that bucked the downward were Cyber Bay Corp., DM Investments Corp., Megaworld Corp.

Cyber Bay jumped 25.4 percent to close at P0.74 a share after the business reported on Saturday that San Miguel Corp. had acquired a 23.7-percent additional stake in the dominant property developer at an 80-percent discount. — **Boots C. Dumlao**

91-day treasury bill rate yield down to 3.897%

By Bernie W. Dominguez

THE YIELD ON THE BENCHMARK 91-day treasury bill went down by 3.7 basis points in an average of 3.897 percent even as investors nudged up investments on the safer investments.

National Treasurer Roberto S. Tan said in an interview that buyers were showing uncertainty in anticipation of the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas' move on its policy rates when the Monetary Board meets on Thursday.

Also, Tan said investors were uncertain about whether the government would need to borrow more, depending on what the budget deficit will be in 2009.

Finance officials have said last year's deficit was likely to have reached about P229 billion, more than the ceiling of P205 billion.

If the government would need to borrow more, investors might have the leverage to seek higher yields.

Tan said yesterday's results were "sideways," meaning that the changes were insignificant.

The Bureau of the Treasury had given partial awards for the offers for the 182-day and 364-day T-bills.

The resulting interest rates "were all below the rates for the same deals settled in the secondary market," Tan said.

Related on the 182-day bills were up by 3.6 basis points while that for the 364-day issue went up by 8.5 basis points.

The six-month debt paper now runs the government an average of 4.140 percent, while the year-long issue runs 4.667 percent.

The said secondary market rates for the three-month bill settled at 4.225 percent, six-month bill at 4.237 percent, and year-long at 4.705 percent.

In yesterday's public auction, investors tendered a total of P19.01 billion or more than twice the offer of P8.5 billion.

Buyers tendered P6.985 billion or more than thrice the P2.0 billion offer for the 182-day bill.

Lenders plotted P4.015 billion or more than the P3.5 billion tendered for the 364-day bill on offer.

Still begging the question

MARKET RIDER

DINO SANTIAGO

LIKE ALWAYS, WHEN MY COLumn hits a chord that some powers feel affected, I get instantaneous reactions that range from warm to icy and my comments in connection with the recent market play of BDO, MBC to disastrous Inc. (MBC) shares elicited the same gamut of reactions.

Most notable is from MBC itself. MBC assistant corporate secretary Elsie V. Valdez filed on the same day with the Securities and Exchange Commission an updated MBC Form 17-C for the company.

This was circulated as Disclosure No. 043720010 by the Philippine Stock Exchange under the title "Clarificatory statement re: Philippine Daily Inquirer news column 10 Jan. 2010."

In SEC Form 17-C, the signatory stipulated that the full and "exact name of issuer as specified in its charter" was MBC Allied Industries Inc. They put "N.A." or not applicable under Item 9 which asked for the company's former name and address.

Under Item 11, which asked the company to indicate the item numbers reported, the answer was "Item 9, other events."

Item 9's stated subject was "Why MBC is not a buy yet" column in the Philippine Daily Inquirer on Jan. 10, 2010.

"We refer, in reference to the above-stated article written by Ms. Dea Bisnar in his column 'Market Rider' (Philippine Daily Inquirer, Jan. 10, 2010) which stated in part: '...On Jan. 22, aside from possible renaming the company Inc. EO Holdings (to reflect the interests of the new principal, if we are to believe the gossips), stockholders of record will redeem the par value of the company to 0.20 per share from P1 through a reorganization that will pave the way for the entry of the company's "white knight" and for him not to incur the slightest abuse on his money unlike what you are to incur when you have bought before Jan. 22.'

"In view of the apparently incorrect information stated in the above article, we would like to clarify that the reduction of the par value of the shares is not among those in the agenda for the upcoming special stockholder's meeting. The truth of the matter is that this proposed reduction had already been discussed and duly approved during a previous stockholder's meeting (July 21, 2008). This information could easily be verified by the author as well as the reading public in the appointment records of the Exchange in view of our previous disclosures," the disclosure stated.

OD: But what exactly was taken up on July 21, 2008? MBC spared us the details of going to the archives. This was included in the recently approved SEC Item 28-D, a company information report filed by MBC as reason for the postponement of its annual stockholders' meeting slated for the early morning of Jan. 22, 2010.

It was said to be pending in the SEC, but which apparently received approval not long after the postponement and transmitted to the PSE at 3:31:08 p.m. in the same day.

Under the appropriate item in SEC Item 28-D, the company said: "On July 21, 2008, MBC held its annual stockholders' meeting at the Manila Polo Club for the purpose of electing new members of its board for 2008-2009. The stockholders also approved the amendments to MBC Allied Industries Inc.'s Articles of Incorporation in line with the reclassification and quasi-reorganization of the company, as follows: (1) Change in the corporate name from "MBC Allied Industries Inc." to "MBC Allied Inc."; (ii) Decrease in the par value of MBC's common shares from P1 per share to P0.20 per share, with the corresponding decrease in its authorized capital stock from P400 million divided into 400 million common shares with a par value of P1 per share to P80 million divided into 400 million common shares with par value of P0.20 per share; (iii) Increase in its authorized capital stock up to, or not exceeding P9.5 billion or 47.5 billion shares at a par value of P0.20 per share; (iv) Refer to aspect of retention, wherein consumer shares of up to, or not exceeding P758 million or 37.5 billion shares out of the increase in the authorized capital stock."

"The rationale behind the capital restructuring and proposed modification of the par is to enable the company to issue and sell common shares to reduce its outstanding deficit. On the other hand, the proposed increase in MBC's authorized capital stock will give way to additional capital infusion by potential investors."

"On 6 August 2009, the board elected the officers of MBC Allied and its various committees' audit, nomination and compensation committees. In the same meeting, the board approved the partial implementation

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Smart Biz Junior	Php 2,695	512 kbps	384 kbps	1 unit of 15" LCD Monitor and 1 Laptop
Smart Biz Senior	Php 3,695	1 mbps	512 kbps	1 unit of 15" LCD Monitor and 1 Laptop
Powerpack A	Php 4,695	2 mbps	1.0 mbps	2 units of 15" LCD Monitor and 1 Laptop
Powerpack B	Php 5,695	3 mbps	1.5 mbps	3 units of 15" LCD Monitor and 1 Laptop
Powerpack C	Php 6,695	4 mbps	2.0 mbps	4 units of 15" LCD Monitor and 1 Laptop

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Investment pledges for Subic down to $190M

Licensed to shout

LET US BE CLEAR ABOUT THIS—THE guys here in my homeroom are getting unhinged over all the bad news about an IT company that they think was brought out by journalists.

Inside groups say the company is only bluffing the unwitting public, as it makes touchlands of money through the LTO project.

Worst of all, they see incriminating dopplerin on the part of the government, as some government officials perhaps make something on the side.

That may be so, but still the Hirohiwa computerization project is most welcome in my dental boys who used to suffer from the LTO's inefficiency.

On my birthday, I can now renew my driver's license in less than an hour. Not too long ago, this simple renewal transaction would take me until my next birthday.

I don't know about those hand-wringing groups, but for such a convenience, I am willing to pay a little extra.

* * *

TO ME, this is the most important fact about The Hirohiwa BOT project. It is totally real-life, not Pal-blood.

It was such a huge amount for our cash-strapped government that technically should spend every centavo of the national budget for education and health, and nothing else.

Precisely, because the government did not have the money, the LTO had to find out their computer under a BOT scheme. This means the contractor would put up all the capital, and LTO would just cut down on work for the revenues.

By the way, if the LTO chose another bidder (Japanese firm Fujitsu), the computerized registration would cost no more than double the rate of Hirohiwa.

The company's ROI on the LTO computerization is about 8 percent. This is a low figure. Believe me, no company would take such a low return from government computerization contracts.

The point is this: You can hardly find any fault in the LTO computerization project.

It is just that some groups are backmouthing it because the whole LTO is doing another project with the same functions, the one called EDSA, or rather frequency ID system developed by Hirohiwa.

Which is also not a bad idea, by the way. It gives every vehicle in this country a unique identity, as a measure against car theft, for instance. I think we should have done the EDSA a long time ago.

But some groups are throwing all sorts of bad things about the EDSA project, which led to their throwing bad things about the LTO licensing and registration (BOT contract).

It's just that nobody would say where it would all stop.

* * *

SMUGGLERS, be warned. The Bureau of Customs already discovered your favorite modus operandi at the Port of Manila.

BREAKTIME

Conrado B. Banal III

To avoid payment of taxes and import duties, smugglers simply come their shipment through the BOC's Informal Entry Division. Importers and customs brokers actually need BOC accreditation for their import papers to go through the so-called Informal Entry Division.

A couple of weeks ago, however, the new BOC collector for the Port of Manila, a certain Rolad Gatchalian, uncovered the scheme used by customs brokers to bypass the BOC accreditation system.

So I read, their paid final import papers processed by the Informal Entry Division.

I heard that some brokers are about to roll in that particular division. Customs Commissioner Napoleon Morales ordered everybody there to submit written explanations on why he should not relieve them.

What's in the piece was that Gatchalian recently ordered the release of a huge shipment of electric guitar starter sets—some 200 pieces of "Maddstro" brand of electric guitars with amplifiers and other accessories.

The shipment was consigned to G. A. Enterprises, which also carries the Japanese "Yamaha" brand of musical instruments.

My info is that Yamaha's accreditation with the BOC expired in 2008. No particular—not yet through the information technology (IT) age?

Well, with a net weight of 1.5 metric tons, the shipment was valued at P3 million. It was declared as P57,752!

Fajardo paid import duties and taxed only about P5,000! Is it all Dedicated?

* * *

SOME GOOD news from Cebu. The power company of tycoon George Ty, who is the Metrobank Group chief, is on track in its 246-megawatt $350-million coal-fired power plant project.

That means that the province may finally solve its power problem in the near future. At the moment, Cebu is already suffering from long power outages. Its commercial establishments (such as malls and hotels) have to provide their own generators.

Anyway, that company is officially known as Cebu Energy Development Corp. (CEDC), which is owned by Global Business Power Corp. (GBPC) of the Metrobank group.

The company said its shareholders, plus its joint venture partners, surrounded the total listing of one billion shares each.

Thus, the first billion shares of stock go down prior to the Cebu grid by March that year. The other two units are expected to be online in June and in December.

The partners of the Metrobank group were the Aboitiz Power Corp., Team Energy Corp. and Robinsons Electric Industries Corp.

They are also the biggest of the big three coal-fired power barrages. You think Cebu is in good hands? Me too!

Market Rider

of the increase in the million-unit capital stock by P2.9 billion divided into 145 billion shares with par value of P0.20 per share, thus increasing an authorized capital stock from P100 million divided into 500 million shares to P3 billion divided into 15 billion shares with par value of P0.20 per share."

On 23 September 2008, Pacific Asia Capital Corp. (PACC) now Manila Capital Corp. (MCC) and MBC entered into a deed of assignment wherein the following were taken over inside: (1) Assumption of liabilities by PACC of P228.39 million from various creditors of MBC; (2) MBC agreed to the settlement by PACC of its loans from various creditors; (3) PACC and MBC agreed to extinguish the debt by converting it into common shares out of MBC's increased authorized capital stock of P3 billion, (4) PACC will subscribe to 97.28 million remaining the 20 percent unissued subscription for the period increase of MBC's authorized capital stock of P2.9 billion or 3,635 billion shares out of the 14.5 billion shares increase with par value of P0.20 per share; (5) PACC will assign, convey, transfer and consider as extinguished MBC's debt in the amount of P329.56 million as partial payment for 1,612 billion shares. As a result of this agreement, PACC will have 1,625 billion shares, or 97.28 percent of the outstanding capital stock of MBC, thus effectively acquiring control over MBC."

Bottom line spin

Okay, if that's that. PACC could now let Bong Lao, who is what to the values MBC from 2245—to the attached audited financial statements of Changyang Capital for the year 2008 up to the unaudited quarterly report of corresponding financial statements ending Sept. 30, 2009... the stated par value of the company was still P1 and not P0.20 per share? This is on top of the fact that she owned 0.68 company shares in MBC All-Ind Industries Inc.," without citing the underlying motives but it has been changed to MBC All-Ind Inc?

You note that the market play in the shares of MBC had included the impression that the par value of MBC was P1 and not P0.20 per share, to consider little investment unchanged. This other aspect based on the computerized trading activities of the PSE since the market swings of MBC shares at the end of the year up to last Friday, Jan. 22, 2010. The stated par value is "it's par share" and the current full name is still "MBC Allied Industries, Inc." How many?

If you may reach the Market Rider at marketrider@gmail.com with or directly at demarcation@yahoo.com

CASIO

EXPENSE REPORT

Business

ACE Center for Entrepreneurship & Management Education, Inc.

Entrepreneurship and Management Series in the

Real Estate Industry

MODULE 1 **Highest and Best Land Use Planning**
March 13 to 14, 2010

Major Topics: Environmental Assessment; Market Analysis and Forecasting; Specific Program / Technical Concepts; Land Use Planning Framework; Actual Application in Participants' Property/Project

Key Learning: More viable use of property

MODULE 2 **Financial Packaging & Sourcing**
April 10 to 11, 2010

Major Topics: Project Funding Alternatives; Project Financing Requirements; Debt Equity & Pre-Selling Requirements; Preparation of Project Proposal; Actual Application in Participants' Property/Project

Key Learning: More viable funding mix for project

MODULE 3 **Implementation, Development, Marketing & Property Management**
May 14 to 15, 2010

Major Topics: Project Implementation Plan / Organization vs. Development Plan / Schedule Parameters; Project Marketing Alternatives (Marketing Network, Methods, or Internet/Marketing Tools); Property Management Plan; Actual Application in Participants' Property/Project

Key Learning: More practical implementation strategy for project

LEAD FACULTY

Prof. Antonio A. Antonio

Mr. Francis V. Lindayan

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BUSINESS

Broadband speeds seen to grow tenfold

By Paolo G. Montecillo

INTERNET CONNECTION SPEEDS IN THE Philippines are expected to grow at least tenfold in the next five years as growing demand for broadband services encourages industry players to invest heavily in the sector.

Ayala-led Globe Telecom Inc. and the domestic growth in broadband takings, expected to number two million subscribers today from almost none three years ago, would not likely slow down in the next five years.

"We're in this high growth stage for broadband, similar to what the cellphony industry experienced in the late 90s," Globe head for carrier services Gil Genio said in a briefing.

"I wouldn't be surprised if, in five to ten years from now, broadband connection speeds would be at 5- to 10-megabytes per second (mbps) for every user."

The expected increase, at the low end of 5 mbps will be about 10 times faster than the 512 kilobytes per second the average Filipino user has, he added.

The company on Monday briefed reporters on the company's tie-up with a consortium of telecommunications companies from seven Asia Pacific countries for the construction of the $400-million Southeast Asia-Japan Bloroptic cable (SJC) system.

The undersea cable system, which will span from Singapore to Japan, will be faster than any other Internet system in existence. Out of the SJC's 17 terabytes per second, Genio said the company would have an initial share of 20 gigabytes per second (gbps), which would more than double the company's current bandwidth capacity of 23 gbps.

He said the additional capacity which could be leveled up further to nearly 960 gbps, would help the company lower costs, increase consumers speeds and improve the quality of services.

Earlier, Globe said it had invested about $67 million for the construction of the SJC and infrastructure that would connect the Philippines to the system, which is expected to open in late 2012.

Philip Morris consolidates regional facility in Subic

By Abigail L. Ho

SUBIC BAY FREEPORT—EXERCISING TO achieve operational and cost efficiencies, Philip Morris Philippines Manufacturing Inc. (PMPMI) has invested P500 million to put up a warehouse where it may store its tobacco leaf supply for the entire region.

The facility has a storage capacity of 14,000 metric tons (MT).

In a briefing following yesterday's groundbreaking ceremony, PMPMI managing director Christopher Nelson said the new facility, located within the Subic Techno Park, would open in July and would start receiving leaf supply there the region by August.

The company is also looking at possibly infusing an additional P500 million to expand the facility's capacity by another 10,000 MT, Nelson said. This expansion, however, will depend on supplier purchasing conditions and market demand.

"We have no timeframe yet for the expansion. The whole point of this investment is for it to be a regional hub. We'll see how this develops," he said.

"We expect this to have a positive impact on our company because the leaf that we'll be buying will be maintained at its best possible quality. To maintain high quality warehouse conditions [and] to control [the warehouse] will also give us quicker access to our own leaf supply."

He said the new warehouse would have state-of-the-art features, including humidity control, fire suppression equipment, and air-conditioning. These features would ensure the quality of tobacco leaf imported from suppliers in China, India, Indonesia, and Thailand.

The imported tobacco leaves would be stored at the Subic warehouse, then shipped and processed to the company's cigarette manufacturing facilities here in the country, as well as in Malaysia and Indonesia, Nelson said.

The company had earlier invested P50 million to renovate its warehouse at the Subic Bay Freeport's Rosario area. The 18,000-square-meter facility, which started operating in January 2008, now has the capacity to hold 6,146 metric tons of tobacco leaf.

For 2010, PMPMI expects to grow its business by up to three percent, or just in line with the industry, Nelson said.

'09 budget gap said to hover at P290B

Hope pinned on better tax take

By Ianne P. Domingo

THE BUDGET DEFICIT FOR 2009 hovered at "around P290 billion," said finance officials, citing eleventh-hour data that had just come in.

When asked for updates, National Treasurer Roberto B. Tan said the deficit revolved around that amount.

Malacañang will announce the actual figure when it holds a briefing on the economy next week.

Finance Secretary Margarito B. Teves, while declining to give exact figures, said the amount could settle within the range set by economic managers, and would not likely go over P300 billion.

"If, say, the Bureau of Internal Revenue reports additional collection for December, that may offset the emerging deficit figure," Teves said.

Last week, the BIR said it collected P132 billion more than its goal of P963 billion for December. The excess yield is double the amount reported earlier this month.

That was only the second time in 12 months that the BIR met its goal. The first time was in June of 2009 when the agency collected P6 billion more than its target of P143 billion.

For 2010, the government has set a deficit target of P250 billion—P40 billion more than the P210-billion ceiling it had earlier set.

For that, Teves said, the government would need to borrow some P25 billion more from domestic lenders to meet its requirements.

A planned $500-million Samurai bond float—the government's first in 2010. The Philippines obtained accreditation from the EU on Jan. 13, said another BSP official.

For EU, RP is trusted fish source

By Rita T. Orchondra

THE EUROPEAN UNION has accredited the Philippines as a legal and reasonable source of tuna.

According to Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) director Malcolm Sarmiento, the Philippines conforms to rules classifying tuna sourced through illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing (IUUF) methods—a shielding factor for the Europeans.

The IUUF rules were implemented on Jan 1, 2010. The Philippines obtained accreditation from the EU on Jan. 13, said another BSP official.

But Philippine exporters would not suffer from a decline in export revenues because, say most fish vessels, they could still ship stocks "caught prior to the start of IUUF implementation," Sarmiento said.

Dr. Benedikt Mull, program manager of the EU delegation, confirmed explained why e-mail that, under a regulation adopted by the EU Agriculture and Fisheries Council in Sept. 2008, EU importers of processed fish products would have to submit documents that detail their sources of processed fish products.

Among other documents, they must be certificates that the fish used as raw material would come from legal and sustainable sources, Philippine tuna stocks—one of the country's major export products...are covered by this rule.

The documentation must also include authorized signatories who will issue catch certificates. The signatories, all BFAR officials, have been trained before being granted authorization.

"This will help ensure that both producer and consumer countries can work together to prevent the depletion of fish stocks and ensure the long-term viability of resources," Mull said.

Globe to set up huge remittance network

GLOBE TELECOM INC. HAS secured regulatory approval to build the biggest remittance network in the country, using the company's 10,000 prepaid loading centers, such as convenience stores and food establishments, throughout the country.

Globe yesterday said in a statement that the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas' Monetary Board recently approved the request of Globe subsidiary G-Xchange Inc. (GXI), to use the telco's subsidiaries as GCash outlets.

"Our distribution system is one of our most valuable assets and combined with our current GCash network of partners will help us significantly expand our efforts to provide a reliable for financial inclusion to more Filipinos all over the country," said Ernesto Cu, president and CEO of the telecommunications unit of Ayala Corp.

Promoting the use of electronic money applications such as GCash has been a major initiative of the government's effort to lower the cost of remitting money in the Philippines.

The expanded GCash outlet network supports the delivery of money transfers from abroad through GXI's international partner outlets in 35 countries.

Remittances from the country's eight million overseas Filipino workers (OFW) make up about a tenth of domestic output.

With the approval, Globe said it would be able to transfer sub-dealers into virtual automated teller machines, where GCash subscribers could deposit or withdraw money in their accounts.

Due to the country's geographical characteristics, three out of every four Filipinos, have limited access to banking services, Globe said. But with GCash now widely available, people in far-flung areas may be able to withdraw remittances, settle household bills and pay for everyday services.

—Paolo G. Montecillo

GOINGS-ON

Ateneo Congress on Jan. 29

THE ATENEO PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION ALUMNI ASSOCIATION (APAA) celebrates the university's sesquicentennial theme of "Building the Nation" through the APS Sesquicentennial Congress on Jan. 29 at the APS campus, Rockwell Center, Makati City.

The day-long event will comprise a series of sessions on "governance and leadership" and "mobilizing communities".

Among the 11 experts who will share their views are Mayor Sonia Lorenzo, Sen. Isidro Ricardo Lapeña, Jessica Sibal, president, Rehabilitation Gang Peacemaker Foundation; Jose Tale, chair, Couples for Christ; Carlos Medina Jr., executive director, Ateneo Human Rights Center; Protected Species; Leaders for Health; Dinagat; Dinagat Province Governor Nonoy, vice president, The Medical City; Eduardo Morato, chair, Asian Center for Entrepreneurship; and Lydia Fonte, president, CDR Institute.

New GMA Marketing exec

GMA NETWORK NAMED LEILEE G. MANALAC president and chief operating officer of subsidiary GMA Marketing and Productions Inc. (GMPI).

Manalac succeeded Manuel P. Quiogue, who retired at the end of 2009.

Prior to her appointment, Manalac was managing director of Starcom MediaVest Group (SMG) Philippines.

Since she assumed leadership of SMG in 2000, the company has steadily established itself as the leading media agency in the market, with consecutive #1 ranks.

Manalac led the largest media agency in the country, which accounted for about 30 percent market share.

She is also vice chair of Media Specialists Association of the Philippines. She is also accredited at the University of Asia and the Pacific. A graduate of the University of the Philippines, Manalac took postgraduate studies at Ireland & Singapore.

Also Thrives Seven Sol Jose

LIFESTYLE Wellness

How red are you?

By Amy Carounel
Contributor

How to use color on your path to wellness

THIS HAS NOTHING to do with lobster potatoes, but how you respond and relate to the colors red.

As one of the primary colors, and is connected to the first chakra. According to Ayurveda, the traditional medicinal system of India, the human being is not only a physical body but an energy field network. Chakras are energy centers in charge of the body's various systems and organs. The energies of each chakra affect us physically, emotionally, and mentally.

The first or root chakra is found at the tailbone at the base of the spine, and corresponds to the sense of smell (odors).

As mentioned, which means the "Science of Life," balance is important, and ideally the energies of the seven chakras should be aligned with each other, with no single chakra dominating the others. Ideally.

Physical problems are symptoms of imbalances in the chakras, and usually the imbalance first manifests itself emotionally and mentally.

Physical healing starts with emotional and mental healing, and this means understanding why an imbalance occurred, and working to correct it.

One way to balance an affected chakra is by thinking from the energy of the chakra to complementary color.

Scientifically, when two lights of complementary colors were combined, they produced white light, which indicates the presence of all colors, and hence, balance.

Red's complementary color is the color wheel is the opposite, and thus when looking at how you feel with red energy in you, check against it how you feel, or need the energy of turquoise, which is connected to the fifth chakra that calms the throat and thyroid.

All about power

When looking at the qualities of red as the color of the first chakra, it helps to note that as the first chakra, its energy is fundamental, being located at the base of the spine. This means that red is all about power, identity, vitality, strength, passion, stability and security.

In the first chakra, a balanced energy would be manifested when you have a passion for truth, and courage to be who you really are. This means walking your talk. Drive upon your divine history as your strength and the base of your being.

When your red energy is balanced, you are able to communicate your needs appropriately, anything that hinders your sense of self. You know you are safe, and are just a body, and you are your physicality well to express this optimal manifestation.

You have ease to relax, accept that your Source is in control, and being you could easily always the best action to take. You are able to forgive and forget.

At all times, you know you are energized by a Higher Power, whatever you are bred, you have are been acting in guided by the Spirit. Take time to play and have fun, and you can get going again as long as you for the Spirit flow.

Hypertension

However, more often than not, people tend to have too little or too much red energy leading to an imbalance. Hypertension is a sign of too much red energy manifesting with symptoms of imbalance is when you are all action without talk, when you escape into activity rather than see what you must. This is the world of the workaholic, who has every excuse not to sit down in a much needed two-hour dialogue, but would rather be occupied and self-destructive with others.

You become bitter and critical, but it may not even be obvious except when you speak with excitement. Gut, words, when you get over, whelmed by your brain, or when you get hit by past business or even apathy, you are also showing signs of imbalance.

Signs of too little red energy: apathetic, suicidal, weak willed, can't reach goals, insecure, has little or no self-confidence, feeling ashamed, ungrounded, fearful, needing approval and frustrated.

How to balance

For a little more red energy into your life, just start by looking at it or wearing something red. Surface your hidden anger issues and discuss them with a counselor.

Take up a sport or exercise. Get to know yourself more, and nurture your natural talents. Bear your fears. Do something spontaneous and impulsive. Take leadership courses or self-empowerment classes.

E-mail the author at asolaaccbd@gmail.com

How to balance

Tap on the fifth chakra's energy. Looking at something turquoise blue, or even wearing something in this color might help. Do actual expressive energy work: learn to communicate with words and not just with your body. Relate to be honest and maintain integrity.

Manage stress and work on overcoming anger issues or raising anger management classes. Learn that the loss action is creating in your brains, knowing that He's in control.

Practice the "Sabbath" rule: even God rested after creating the universe. Because everything was in perfect order. So or a spiritual retreat.

Discover the joys of pregnancy yoga

By Shiran Chua
Contributor

GOOD BIRTH TO A HEALTHY child is the top priority of all mothers. Eating right and exercise are always good advice for any mother-to-be. At the same time, I'm sure many a mother is interested in making childbirth as easy as possible, and in getting back in shape as soon as possible.

My friend, Tri Quinsee, gave birth last November to a healthy boy, Bradley. I saw her progress from month to month during her pregnancy.

What made Tri's pregnancy different is that from the moment she knew she was pregnant with her third child at age 38, she cherished the special time and took yoga while pregnant.

Bikram yoga

Tri started doing Bikram yoga in 2006. This style of yoga involves practicing in a heated room for 90 minutes. She usually had more than a year of experience when she got pregnant.

Knowing that the Bikram series had modified postures for pregnant women, Tri chose to do the pregnancy series of Bikram yoga outlined by Rajashree Choudhury.

Interestingly, I am approached by women asking if we do pregnancy yoga at our studio. While we can guide students through our version of a pregnancy routine, my usual answer is to challenge and breathwork as Bikram yoga is, it is not for everybody.

Certainly, the pregnancy series of Bikram yoga is better suited for women who have at least six months of regular practice with Bikram yoga. In this way a woman is already familiar with the easy but body moves with the Bikram postures. She knows how her body is supposed to feel in the postures how to move into and out of the postures safely.

With this as a foundation, body awareness to already present and modifications can then be made to the postures to safely accommodate the growth of the baby. For new-comers to yoga, it is better to explore more gentle forms of prenatal yoga for your own safety and for the safety of your child.

Likewise for doing yoga while pregnant often highlights the many benefits that prenatal yoga can bring, while eliminating preconceptions to carefully choose the postures to be done, avoiding any postures that will stress the baby.

Physically, prenatal sequences keep important muscle groups strong, especially the lower back, a common area of complaint as the baby gets heavier, and the leg muscles for women who are constantly on their feet. Certain postures also relieve the possibility of easier labor by relaxing the cervix and birth canal and keeping the pelvic muscles ready for the birth canal.

Recovery from birth is also expedited by later for yoga practitioners. When Tri was in her labor-training, Tyson stood slightly behind a women who was two weeks from giving birth. I kept on telling one of my postures because Deepi on looking of that amazing body with a swollen abdomen doing all the postures beautifully.

I later learned that she was back in her practice within two weeks of birth. The baby was apparently very alert at birth and had a pleasant disposition.

Breathing techniques

At the very heart of any yoga practice is breathing. The breathing techniques learned during prenatal yoga classes are very useful during pregnancy and labor.

I am a firm believer that the development of the baby is affected by a mother's state of being. As the mother learns to calm herself down in any situation through breath, so is the baby able to grow in a calm and nurturing environment while still in its watery world. As the mother calms herself down, she becomes more aware of her baby. The little movements, maybe even a flutter.

It is this quiet time with her baby that begins to cement bond between mother and child, and is a fundamental joy of all mothers.

From my friend who teaches prenatal yoga, Felicitas Cambronero, I learned that mothers tend to bond in her classes, sharing in the common experience that binds them. From her experience and tradition becoming parents, they confide their fears and joys to each other.

The building blocks of friendships thus give way to play groups for their children and enduring family ties. They look back and can share their fondness knowing all too well what they went through together.

For Tri, this has been a different experience compared to her first two pregnancies. When she was pregnant with her daughter, she experienced her back pain and sciatica. When she was pregnant with her son, she was diagnosed with back pain whatsoever in the days she did class, she started scheduling all her errands on those days. Best of all, she had no morning sickness.

Another friend of mine, Lisl Jones, is mom to her fifth month. She practiced Bikram yoga for more than two years before getting pregnant, and she had no problem transitioning into the pregnancy-adjusted postures.

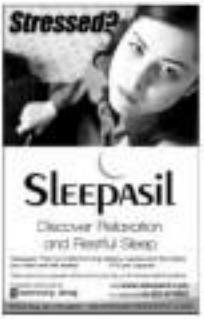
I'm hoping she will have as positive an experience as Tri did by having a Bikram yoga pregnancy series. Congratulations to Tri and baby Brad in healthy, alert and bubbling with energy.

I can only hope more women dive over the joy of doing pregnancy yoga. May they use it as a pathway to finding a style of yoga that suits them for good who they give birth.

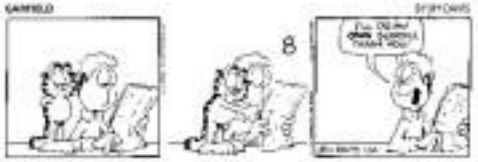
The author is an instructor at Bikram Yoga Manila. Visit www.bikramyogamanila.com.

Tri Quinsee and her son, Bradley

As the mother learns to calm herself down in any situation through breath, so is the baby able to grow in a calm and nurturing environment while still in its watery world



GARFIELD BY JIM DAVIS



A LIFAH BY JOE ABERRA

PUGAD BABOY BY PH. JUNIOR

DICK TRACY

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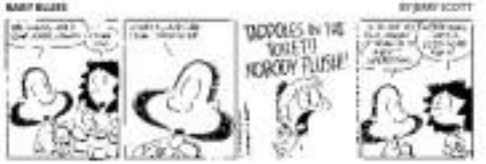

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SEEK BY DANIEL SHELTON

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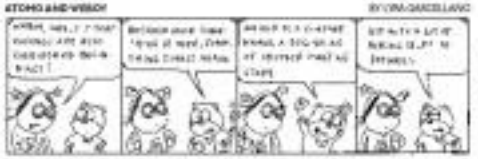


KUDO MACHINE BY FAMAS ABERRA

HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCIS DRAKE

YOU BORN TODAY You are very bold about getting what you want in life, sometimes you end up in controversy. You likely are academically above average and have good primary education. Entertainment and sports are available. Recognition is one of your strongest motivations. You are a natural leader. Others look to you for direction and you are usually willing to provide it. You are a good judge of character and are a natural diplomat. You have a strong sense of justice and are a champion of the underdog. You are a natural teacher and have a strong desire to help others. You are a natural leader. Others look to you for direction and you are usually willing to provide it. You are a good judge of character and are a natural diplomat. You have a strong sense of justice and are a champion of the underdog. You are a natural teacher and have a strong desire to help others.

ARIES (March 21 to April 20) This is an interesting day. You will have a lot of energy and will be able to get things done. You may feel a little tired in the evening, so make sure you get enough rest.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20) Today, some of you will be in love with your partner or someone special. Others will feel lonely and unloved. Be open to new people and new experiences.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20) You may be feeling restless and want to do something different. Try to channel this energy into something positive.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22) You are in a good mood today. You may feel more sociable than usual. You could have an interesting conversation with someone you've been wanting to get to know better.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22) An interesting weekend may see you make new friends or renew old acquaintances. You may also find yourself in a romantic situation.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22) You feel strongly today about your family. You may have an argument with someone you love. Try to see things from their point of view.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22) You are in a very social mood today. You may have a lot of fun with friends or family. You may also find yourself in a romantic situation.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21) You are in a very passionate mood today. You may have a strong desire to be with someone you love. You may also find yourself in a romantic situation.

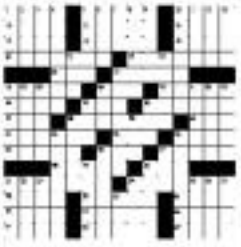
SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21) Today, you're in a very adventurous mood. You may want to try something new or go to a place you've never been before. You may also find yourself in a romantic situation.

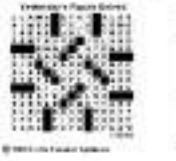
CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19) Financial matters may be on your mind today. You might have unexpected expenses or receive unexpected money. You may also find yourself in a romantic situation.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18) You are in a very creative mood today. You may have a lot of fun with friends or family. You may also find yourself in a romantic situation.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20) You're in a very emotional mood today. You may have a lot of fun with friends or family. You may also find yourself in a romantic situation.

CROSSWORD PUZZLE





CONCEPTIS SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku By Dan Cassel

3 6 2 7 4	9 5	1
1 7	8 4 2	2
4	7 3	6 9
8	9	2 6 5
	5	4 7

Difficulty Level ★★

HOW TO PLAY SUDOKU

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9.
For advanced puzzles visit www.sudoku.com

Answers to previous puzzle

2 8 3	4 6 9	1 7 5
9 1 5	7 3 8	4 2 6
4 7 6	2 5 1	8 9 3
1 2 7	6 4 5	9 3 8
3 6 4	8 9 2	5 1 7
5 9 8	3 1 7	6 4 2
8 3 9	5 7 4	2 6 1
7 4 2	1 6 8	3 5 9
6 5 1	9 2 3	7 8 4

How ballroom dancing keeps Pinky Puno in top form

By Margot C. Enriquez
Contributor

BALLROOM DANCE PROPONENT Michaela "Pinky" Meidam Puno celebrates a 40-year-old, at 5'2", she weighs 106 lb and wears size 2 even after being married to lawyer and Local Government Secretary Rodolfo Puno for a year, business tycoon children and raising 10 grandchildren. She's got the best food of an athlete, according to her medical exam. Her partner and trainer Steve Borgino '05, a younger than her look, yet they look her on the dance floor.

"I'm at fit as the day I got married because of dancing. When I go out to compete, I look and feel the part," she declares.

In real life, she needs a significant shift from teaching ballet to dance sport. "I love the beauty and ethereal grace of ballet. But I was not built with the frame of a ballerina. In ballroom dancing, you can be of any age and size shape and still be a part of the scene. In ballet, you have and dance independently unless you are good enough to perform a pas de deux. In ballroom dancing, you always have a partner who does the lead and you follow. It's a constant interaction in time and patience," says Puno.

"Ballroom dancing also offered me an outlet for my competitiveness. I am not a social dancer who frequents ballroom dance clubs. I like to challenge myself, set goals, draw parameters, practice, practice in a studio to perfect the skills and techniques to meet this goal."

Based in the United States, Puno joins the Pro-Am competitions, where she studies partners the teacher and competes with other couples on the same technique level. He and Borgino have managed to make it to the finals despite the stiff competition from more seasoned contestants.

"I've been able to work my brain as a ballroom dancer by memorizing 14 different routines—five Latin dances, five standard and four American smooth dances—waltz, tango, foxtrot, and blues—same," she says.

With her experience, she is organizing the third Philippine Stardust, an open international ballroom championship which will be held at Makati Shangri-La Hotel on Feb. 13. Aside from being the chaperone of the event, she is preparing for her upcoming number, created by Talut Tavares, a prominent choreographer. A backup of six dancers will form her as a few times.

PINKY PUNO, ballroom dance proponent and chair of Philippine Stardust

PINKY'S ballet training gave her good lines and the graceful partner with Steve Borgino

Original looks

Asked how she maintains her looks, Puno replies: "Everything is original." She considers Ice Ex Hydrix for her dear skin. She enhances her two locks every day with a high-alternative performance level. Puno doesn't believe in starving or going on a high-protein diet. In competitions, she eats eggs and waffles for breakfast, noodles for lunch, and a few cups of Coke to get a pick-upper. Bananas are always associated with fresh bananas. She is wary of energy bars and avoids coffee which becomes acidic for her.

Puno's partnership with Borgino has given her a second mind. "I'm an old as his mom but I never thought about the age gap. I treat him as much. He's happily married with a beautiful wife and two great kids. Our relationship is professional."

Apart from spending half of her life practicing, Puno is experiencing a role reversal, aside from Borgino's mentoring in ballroom dance technique, is demonstrated how she will gentle approach is the best way to correct.

"The first time we met, he put me in front of the mirror and said, 'Ma, look good. Together. We will dance well together'," says Puno. She has initially learned some other teachers would be unfocused, Borgino calls for close focus. He politely says: "Ma'am, you need to focus."

TRACHER: Borgino coaches Puno on perfecting emotion when off stage

As a dancer's life is prone to injuries, Puno wears the scars like a medal of honor. She often tires tears on the same knee, and a torn shoulder muscle in the middle of competition. After this fall, she will fly to Virginia for a hip replacement. "I was diagnosed with Avascular necrosis—no more blood supply on my left hip." Her surgeon assured her that her dancing has kept her on top form and that she could even join a competition in November.

For many senior women in my Pro-Am competitions who are 10 years older than me and I notice you have leading role, stage and routines as if there was no limitations. Some competitions because they have no to bone my skills. I could very well just go out dancing at the clubs here. But that is not me. I love the training, the practices, the new choreographies. We get to see everyone, feeling the music and gliding across the dance floor with a partner that's in total sync with you."

While other dancers would not see eligibilities dirty, Puno is determined. "Would you stop doing what you love to do?"

The best exercises can be done outside the gym

By Mitzi Aclipa-Mendoza
Contributor

LACK OF TIME AND FINANCES and inaccessibility to an exercise area should not hinder one to engage in physical activities. The Department recently released by the American Council on Exercise include home gyms and body weight training which do not require one to enroll in a fitness center. They can even help one save at least P1,000 to as high as P10,000 per month.

But one can also burn calories without the use of a treadmill, chest press machine and abdominal crunch machine. Here are some options on how to start a cost-effective workout plan:

Treadmill vs. walking, running

Many exercise would rather walk or run than have a treadmill for every up and coming exercise. One can burn the same amount of calories by walking or running, or even more because one's speed is not limited by a program like the one in a treadmill.

Choose the most accessible place to walk, jog or run. Measure the exact distance of your chosen route which can range from 100 meters to 2 kilometers. Most walking paths around malls measure 1 km which is about a 10- to 15-minute moderate or brisk walk.

Change your route to longer distances to increase your pace as you progress. Consult a doctor before you begin this exercise.

Resistance training machines vs. functional training

The most common exercise machines inside a gym are leg press machine, chest press machine, lat pull-down machine and shoulder press machine. Fitness trainers will always guide you on how to use these machines properly and they will give you the most appropriate weights based on your fitness level, goals and other physical conditions. Ask qualified fitness professionals about proper resistance weight training exercises and programming for safety concerns.

THE BICYCLE. Do it on your back

To get your money's worth of your gym membership, incorporate your own body weight or lift functional training equipment like dumbbells, weighted balls, body balls and resistance tubes.

Full-body workouts will help you burn more calories since they recruit more muscle fibers to work. Results would not only be about muscle definition but also improved balance, coordination and muscle endurance.

Core and flexibility exercise area and equipment vs. one's own training area

Core workouts are only about exercising one's head toes, but the lower back and muscles in and around the pelvis, as well.

Perform a full exercise routine by focusing on activating the correct muscles, breathing properly and performing exercise breaks. Hold both a chair and use your own body weight as resistance.

To get started, do a few sets of basic exercises like push-ups, squats, lunges, planks, crunches and bridges. Progress to more challenging exercises like Pilates and yoga. Eventually, your core muscles will need more challenge as resistance as you will have to purchase more specialized equipment like Swiss balls, resistance bands and small weighted balls.

E-mail the author at mzdpilar@gmail.com.

WALKING along Broadway High Street

IronKids encourages children to lead active lifestyle

By Irene L. Perez

TRIATHLON IS A CHALLENGING SPORT that requires stamina and drive to complete all three tasks: running, biking and swimming. It's for the competitive adrenaline junkie and sports enthusiasts. Now, kids can join in and have fun while participating in such.

Alaska Milk brings in IronKids Philippines, a spin-off of the Cebu Energy Session 70.3 adult competition held in Cagayan de Oro in Read her root President and CEO of Alaska Milk Corp. Wilfred Steven Uytengsu Jr. said IronKids was set up in the Philippines to encourage the youth to lead an active lifestyle.

"Kids are so into technology—TV, Internet, gaming consoles—that exercise is sometimes limited to just. Iniindi mercises. It is alarming, too, that a lot of children are getting obese. When we held Ironman, a lot of kids around while their parents participated as we thought, why not let them get into their own pace?" Uytengsu said during the award launch at Dusit Thani Manila. "We are also the first to have chest freebirds in Asia."

IronKids aims to prove that young people can be healthy and not be active at the same time. The program is patterned after the Alaska Power Camp—a summer sports programs for kids. All physically fit kids, ages 6-14, can join.

Tese running races kids will the event (1K for 6-8 years old, 1.5K for 9-10 years, 2K for 11-12 years, and 3K for 13-14). The first race will be at the Manila Polo Club Polo Field on Feb. 28. Another marathon is set on April 11. Registration is ongoing until Feb. 28 for the leg. Running coach Ani de Leon gives tips and coordinates.

It will be followed by two squabbles (100m swim and 2K run for 6-8 years old; 200m and 1.5K for 9-10; 300m and 2K for 11-12; 400m and 3K for 13-14) on May 29 at Manila Polo Club and July 25 at Ayala Museum Country Club.

Both parents and kids can join the triathlon as both events simultaneously take place in Greenbelt 5 on The IronKids (300 m swim, 3K bike and 1K run for 6-8 years old; 400m, 6K and 1.5K for 9-10; 300m, 10K and 3K for 11-12; and 400m, 12K and 3K for 13-14) will be on Aug. 21 and Sept. 26.

"We will have the first children's triathlon a day before the Cebu Energy Session 70.3 challenge in Cebu, and the kids will get to see the world triathlon [continued] event. Then we will end the series in September with another children's triathlon," adds Uytengsu.

Participants should submit birth certificate, written parents' consent and registration forms to the registration area at Room 304 Megastall. Visit www.ironkidsph.com for deadlines per competition leg.

Parents' participation is encouraged but they should remember that IronKids is primarily a children's event. To avoid overages parents from meddling in at the competition, organizers will be strictly guarding designated areas from where they could watch the competitors. Medical facilities will also be on standby to ensure the kids' safety.

"It should be the children's initiative to sign up, not the parents pushing kids into joining. The race is designed for first-timers or parents afraid and worry that it's too difficult for kids, and each leg is divided into age groups," adds Uytengsu.

All participants will receive an IronKids

CYSTAL and Daniel Bezerth compete in the IronKids triathlon.

"Race is designed for first-timers and safety measures are practiced"

Tshirt. Winners will receive medals and other goodies.

IronKids is part of Alaska Milk Corp.'s youth sports development program that includes Alaska Basketball and Football Champ. Champ and Alaska Football Cup. Uytengsu's favorite IronMan moment is

FRED Uytengsu Jr., Alaska Milk Corp. CEO

How to manage one's cholesterol profile

NUMEROUS QUESTIONS ON DISEASE prevention have poured in. Let's call it pervasive health. Subjects: disorder associated lifestyle diseases like diabetes, high cholesterol, cancer, hypertension and more.

How do I manage my cholesterol profile?

Cholesterol has everything to do with fats. But not all fats are bad. Assuming as it might sound, cholesterol is important to your health. While many dread the risk of atherosclerosis (hardening of the arteries) and heart attacks due to excessively high cholesterol, it's never too late to restore the situation.

Cholesterol in the skin is converted to vitamin D when touched by the sun's ultraviolet rays.

+Aids in metabolism of carbohydrates. The same as body electrolytes, this mineral cholesterol is produced.

+Helps supplies of adrenal steroid hormones like cortisone.

+Necessary for the production of male and female sex hormones. Know that LDL (low density lipoprotein) carries 60 percent of blood cholesterol, also known as the bad guys. HDL (high density lipoprotein) carries 20 percent of blood cholesterol, the good guys. Thus, the higher your HDL, the lower your chances of developing heart disease. VLDL (very low density lipoprotein) carries 15 percent of blood cholesterol but are unstable to carry LDL.

Control your profile by:

+Increasing your HDL and lowering triglycerides. Diet different from cholesterol although they have a strong connection!

+Keep your fat intake to no more than 20-30 percent of total calories, and more than 10 percent should be saturated fat.

+Eat more apples, carrots, red peppers, tofu, chicken with no skin, broccoli, cauliflower, fiber, eggplant, psyllium husk, fish oil (omega-3 fatty acids, 1000 mg daily), barley, lentils, onions, yoghurt.

+Quit, or cut and puppy, substitute fresh or organically farm

+Exercise to oil

+Use safe oils, like olive and peanut.

+Supplement with chromium picolinate, evening primrose oil.

+Add Vitamin E and C.

Control factors that raise cholesterol levels: smoking, caffeine users, pills, refined sugar, environmental pollutants and food additives.

Consider methionine, choline and inositol and betaine ...Lipotropics reduce primary role is to prevent abnormal accumulation of fats in the liver while detoxifying the organ. They help the liver produce more bile.

Please help me sleep without the use of tranquilizers.

The key is with a neurotransmitter called seratonin, which moves messages between the brain and cells. The body's mechanism of sleep.

Tryptophan, an amino acid, and Vitamin B6, natural and magnesium all work together to help you sleep.

Natural sources: orange cheese, milk, turkey, bananas, dried dates, peanuts, protein.

+Have a regular light exercise two hours before bedtime.

+Take two capsules of melatonin (or the brand Sleepwell) one hour before sleeping.

+Five HTP (hydroxytryptophan) is also a natural tranquilizer.

+Take an yoga.

+Meditate twice a day and 30 minutes before bedtime.

+Massage your chest to sole.

+Adopt a forgiving nature; laugh more often.

How can I control my appetite?

The food you eat is stored mainly in five small stools a day. Intervention does don't work, they make you feel more. Overeat lingering.

Try taking a fiber supplement 30 minutes before meals. Two glasses of water 30 minutes prior to medicine, phenylalanine (amino acid) supplements, 200-500 mg for appetite control.

+Leave plate in my sec.

+Listen to your body when you hear the first time, stop eating.

+If you are hungry, reach out for something healthy like apple, banana soba (uncooked), unfiltered (unripe), nuts (almonds, walnuts).

+There are full glass of red juice which contains nutrients from 30 vegetables and fruits available at Mercury and World of Wellness.

Affirmation: "Life is only as generous as my giving heart."

Love and light!

INSIDE OUT
Cory Quirino

Seminar on healing trauma

WHAT IS TRAUMA? WHAT ARE THE DIFferent types of trauma? What are the devastating effects of trauma to the body, soul, and spirit? How can you heal? How can you minister to others suffering from trauma?

Intercessors Catholic Charismatic Community in cooperation with Elijah House Philippines, specialists in healing trauma victims with Sandra Sellner, chief pastor and prayer ministry at Elijah House USA, the ministry has opened clinics, counselors and conferences, doing lectures and workshops.

Dubbed "Philippines, Tell Your Heart to Heal Again," the seminar will be held on Feb. 5, 6 and 7, 7:30-10 p.m., at Santuario de San Antonio Church, McKinley Road, Forbes Park, Makati City. Exclusively for graduates of "Ministering for Elijah House Basic I & II" and "Keys to Transformation." The seminar will run the whole day on Feb. 21 and 22, 8 a.m.-5 p.m., at Barbara's Restaurant in Casa Manila, Gen. Luna Street, Intramuros, Manila.

Topics to be discussed are the many faces of trauma, the devastating effects of trauma, dismantling the stronghold, and how we get stuck in trauma, among others. There will also be an actual prayer demonstration with a volunteer from the audience and ministers to receive ministry.

Topics for the Wednesday class include praying to release shock, trauma, fear, victim and shame. The lessons of Lazarus' death and the resurrection role of brokenness, among others. Corporate prayer, small group sessions and ushering of demonstrations will end the day.

To register, call Ann-Ann Goldbach at the Seminar secretariat, 7212989/7227681/7009542; e-mail secretariat@seminars.com. Also, call Bal de los Reyes at 2340264 or 09 17-8677584.

Foundation holds mobile dental mission

DUMAGUETE CITY AND CEBU CITY (AP) — Medics bound to the slums of the Philippines' central provinces have completed a mobile dental mission to help residents who rarely get the chance to avail of free dentures, but often not the time to demonstrate their compassion and new teeth on.

Inside the jail's busy clinic, 12 Tzu Chi volunteers grabbed the chance to impart to the prisoners Mother Cheng Yen's global appeal for the Haiti earthquake victims. Mother Cheng Yen is the founder of Tzu Chi and is also known for her call for Filipinos to open their hearts and send their donations to the 40 for of Haitians.

Through a video presentation that recorded Mother Cheng Yen's talk, the inmates, as well as the prison officials, broke down. City Jail says for themselves and pondered on the immense destruction brought by the deadly tremor in Haiti.

Medics' heartwarming message touched the hearts of the inmates and moved them to temporarily step from their work and join with others to pray for the recovery of the citizens of Haiti as well as the rehabilitation of their country.

The five minutes of sincere prayers were followed by a moment of overflowing altruism, as more than 200 prisoners inside the cell watched money from their pockets and wallets, and dropped a portion of it in Tzu Chi's donation boxes.

They also turned over four Tzu Chi coin books that they adopted from the foundation last year.

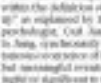
The free clinic was a follow-up to Tzu Chi's dentures provision program, which benefited 52 prisoners from the same jail last. Over 30 were also treated for gum inflammation and for their new sets of dentures as Tzu Chi International Medical Association (TIMA) volunteer dentists Dennis Uy, Anne Olivia and Tommy Uckbi, and medical doctor Vincent Tzu Chi Foundation Philippines Executive Director Tereso Tan Jr. The three inmates with new smiles taken from their gum impressions.

Aside from the volunteers, the San Juan City Jail inmates' dentures also greeted by six dentists from Dumaguete City Medical Society (Dumcesti) in Tolosa, who are donating to the country for a couple of days for their international humanitarian program.

Tzu Chi Foundation is calling for donations for the Haiti earthquake victims.

Donations may be sent to 36 Gerbil Zara cor. Agno Estates, Quezon City, or deposited to International Exchange Bank, account number 0101-10-100307-0 for Philippine Peso and 0101-10-100307-0-0 for Dollar account. For more assistance or inquiries, call (02) 7320001 loc. 100.

Do you believe in coincidence?



INNER AWARENESS
JOANN T. UYCONGO

"THERE'S NO SUCH THING as coincidences, but..."

The following text came from a before-teller friend of mine who asked me if the following are mere coincidences:

"Penguins in Mendoza—After 13 days, Pinoyness champion, killing several bats!"

"Penguins in Lucino—After 13 days, Mexican billionaire resigned."

"Penguins in Buenos—After 13 days, Gaddafi's bombing."

"Penguins in Mesopia—After 13 days, it's shortage."

"Penguins in Cebu—After 13 days, Magsaysay massacre."

My answer to the question is, yes, these are mere coincidences. "But," someone may protest, "you have always said that there's no such thing as coincidences, that everything has a cause."

That's right, I said that, and I stand by that statement. But the above cases do not fall within the purview of the Law of Causality. It is just like one of Aesop's Fables about a coconut who thinks that its screaming is what makes the sun rise, because every time he screams, the sun rises.

In Basic Logic, this is what is known as the "post hoc, ergo propter hoc" fallacy which means, "After this, therefore, because of this."

Just because one thing follows another does not mean the former is the cause of the latter event. There may be absolutely no connection between the two.

The negative-connected 13-days after Pinoyness won in a fight were singled out by whatever wrote those observations. But they could have cited the positive things that happened after Pinoyness won a fight. That's why I say there are more coincidences around it by deliberate selection of only the negative events that happened after a Pinoyness fight. There are also positive events that can occur after another person turned me. "Hindi 'Pin-I Stand' ang pinoy!" seminar is on Jan. 30-31, 9 a.m. to 6 p.m., and the "Basic BSP and Prayer for Development" seminar will be held on Feb. 6-7, 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. at Rm. 306 Pryce Plaza I, Cor. Gandara and Juan Luna Sts., Binondo, Manila. Call 8347245; telefax 8139899; e-mail jannetlucas@yahoo.com.

Synchronicity

The above examples do not fall within the definition of "synchronicity," as explained by the late Swiss psychologist, Carl Jung. According to Jung, synchronicity is the "simultaneous occurrence of two unrelated but meaningful events." It is meaningful or significant to the people involved. And this may be due to a certain causes that are not visible to us. We see only the end results and therefore we consider them to be mere coincidences.

For example, a female friend of mine sent me the following text message:

"Anong ka-talipad! Every time I think about you, or even mention your name, I receive a text from you."

You see, this lady and I rarely see each other and we are not even emotionally involved with each other. Our friendship is strictly professional and we have a very strong platonic link with each other. And we can talk about our personal problems frankly via text messages only. I was told by an entity from the upper dimension that this message and I were very close friends because of a previous life. That's why she pop-

ENTERTAINMENT

Editor Erwin S. Velarde

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Grammys to show MJ's 3D 'Earth Song'

LOS ANGELES—Celine Dion, Carrie Underwood, Usher, Jennifer Hudson and Smokey Robinson will take part in a tribute to Michael Jackson at the Grammy awards on Feb. 21 that will also showcase a movie created by Jackson for his 1995 hit "Earth Song." The Grammy organizers in Los Angeles will also feature the first complete showing of a 3D video movie by "Earth Song" created by Jackson before his death in June. Reuters

CATANDILA and Old Bastard onstage

Why 'Memory' serves just right in musical 'Cats'

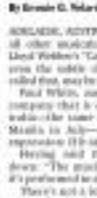
By Bronze G. Velarde

ADELAIDE, AUSTRALIA—LIKE THOSE OF all other analysts, the score of Andrew Lloyd Webber's "Cats" is so structured, that even the subtle changes, if they are to be called that, may be considered built-in.

Paul White, musical director for the company that is ostensibly touring Australia (the same cast that is coming to Manila in July—explains, "There's no improvisation. It's just how they do it!"

Having said that, White boasts it down: "The music doesn't work unless it's performed to a disciplined way."

There's not a lot of room for improvisation. But you're constantly working to refine the performances. If you're not vigilant about your standards . . . here, you'll be in big trouble."



Paul White, musical director, says other actors come to "cover unique."

White, who has a Filipina partner and who was in the Philippines for "Miss Saigon" in 2008, has been doing "Cats" for three years. "Righteous" to his mantra.

"Though it's humans taken to relationships doing something for a long period of time. I cannot afford that."

White says, "In this troupe, I am the leader, musically. He's a policeman, someone to set things right when they get tense. The cast can't do it with each other; that doesn't work, politically. They can't be angry at each other, they have to be happy together. There's a relaxed 'colleague-ship' with everybody, but you can't say I'm one of the boys. I have to be an authority figure, keep a little distance."

No hit parade

A few of the characters are allowed more latitude than others in terms of improvisation, White reveals. To name two: Asparagus the "theater cat" and the mischievous fairy Tom Tagger—both laughter magnets.

He is hard-put to explain why "Memory" is the best-known number of what he considers an exceptional lineup.

"Though the show is chock-a-block to a T, the rest of the score is extremely clever as well," White notes. "It creates a unique musical landscape." That, he adds, "It's multi-genre—rock, jazz, pseudo-operetta, pseudo-classical, the whole gamut . . . very eclectic! I like that. My training is classical and I studied jazz. I've played rock and pop music all my life. I've always been a commercial musician with a classical training."

Many audience members, especially children, are come out of the theater humming the songs about their favorite "Cats," usually Mr. Mistoffelees, Mungojerrie, Rumpleteazer or Skimbleshanks. White adds: "But 'Memory' is so strong, that it tends to edge out the other songs for most adults in the audience. It's a standout hit in most countries."

(In fact, it's been covered by pop greats Barry Manilow, Frenda Clark, Barbra Streisand and Celine Dion, even some Jose Cuervos.)

White proffers another explanation: "'Memory' is extremely powerful, emotional, MGA Music 41 "The Fame Monster," Lady Gaga, MGA Music; 31 "Remember Revolver: The Love Songs of Jose Mari Chan (Deluxe Music One Edition)," Christian Bautista, Universal Records; 47 "Forever," Pupil, MCA Music; 71 "Music + Me," Sarah Geronimo, Viva Records; 81 "For You," Richard Poon, MCA Music; 91 "Soundtrack Of The Soul," Miss Minchif Master; 96 "As I," Martin Nievera & Gary Valenciano, Universal Records; 97 "Calling, Calling," Willie Revillame, Star Records; 99 "The Appointment," Ultrasoft, MCA Music.

Overall

1) "Grenades," Pinoy Original, Star Records; 2) "Bate Na Nga," Willie Revillame, Star Records; 3) "Practice (Platinum Edition)," Swing Out!, MCA Music; 4) "The Love Songs of Jose Mari Chan (Deluxe Music One Edition)," Christian Bautista, Universal Records; 5) "Forever," MCA Music; 6) "Music + Me," Sarah Geronimo, Viva Records; 7) "For You," Richard Poon, MCA Music; 8) "Soundtrack Of The Soul," Miss Minchif Master; 9) "As I," Martin Nievera & Gary Valenciano, Universal Records; 10) "The Appointment," Ultrasoft, MCA Music.

odyssey MUSIC & VIDEO

2 reviews: Gloc-9 maps out Pinoy rap's future

By Pocholo Concepcion

Haunting sociopolitical overtones in cool beats

By Tony M. Maghirang
Contributor

THE ODE SONG THAT TRULY MATTERED last year was not the Black Eyed Peas' "Boom Boom Pow" and "I Gotta Feeling," or even the Brenden Gelo "Nobody."

While those teens got everyone dancing and momentarily forgetting their troubles, another song, "Upuan," by Pinoy rapper Gloc-9, stood out for its haunting sociopolitical overtones driven by cool, mid-tempo beats.

It's a brilliantly crafted dig at the state's test of power, with Gloc-9 chiding rivals with Zeth's Jeazell Grasse, whose unadulterated rendition of the disquieting chorus ("Ayan pa rin . . . nakaupo habakan upo sarung tumpo . . .") seemed just driven and clever vocalese whenever it was played on radio. "Upuan" is a reminder of high-minded entertainment.

The single is just one part of a whole album titled "Matrikula." Loaded with street poetry and with astute staging, too, the collection shows why rap is the most intelligent, dynamic music form these days . . . using abuse in typical authority and dance as needed rhythm, and spewing powerful narratives that use personal experiences to paint stark observations about truth and consequence.

Surprise guests

Featuring a surprise lineup of guest vocalists to duet with Gloc-9, the songs employ metaphors that delve beyond their point solidarity. "Matrikula" (validation of the local Lolher Gay Street on local rounds), "Bisaya Ko" (Sexy Colmenares sings the chorus), "Pangarap" (with featured bluesgirl and "Tere" girl solidly with the symbolic theme of pursuing one's dues. Gloc-9 talks as not only his strong but also how people cope in a family as well as entertainment.

His choice of covers share with consistent theme of protest. In many "Balita," an obvious

GLOC-9: Diverse cover—Asia with heroes of protest.

JAPHONE CO

Haunting sociopolitical overtones in cool beats

By Tony M. Maghirang
Contributor

PINOY RAP REBELS A SWEET RELIEF IN THE area to pull it out of a long-standing rut.

Francisld "emo" literally underground early but post real follows pioneers Andrew E and Michael V have long ago enacted as pro-sensational outline. The resulting void has been left by part-time losers and full-time posers to fill.

The good news is that Francisld protégé, Gloc-9, has released his fourth album, "Matrikula" (Sony Music), which marries street beats with '70s Soft-rock themes (dreadlocked raids from and Sampaguita. In this record, Gloc-9 keeps it real by not sanning his rhymes in the mind set of a people's troublesome while his sounds cherishes between solving ballads and frenetic rockers.

The phenomenon triple-hop of "Upuan" (loaded cum bonnet on the cover's Best Single and top contender for Best Video.

Gloc-9's comrades with Silverchild's Gabby Alipe of Asin's "Bullet" is an outcrop in the Magindanao massacre, while "Tiket" explores an unique Gloc-9 learned from Francisld about working songs with a purpose. "Pasaling ulan . . . soul . . . pesky ding-ding

GLOC-9: Diverse cover—Asia with heroes of protest.

JAPHONE CO

WILLIE Revillame, Joey "Pepe" Smith, Willie Revillame and Mike Hanopol

The Willie and Juan show

WILLIE REVILLAME TEMPORarily set aside the obligatory morally-wrong opener on his TV show "Wowowee" on Saturday and assumed featured the Juan de la Cruz Band. The episode, logged as Willie's all-out Bulilit (Jun. 27) celebration, was highlighted by a Manila-rock jam inside the Kapamilya network's Studio 5 where the classic was lineup of Willy Gonzales, Mike Hanopol and Joey "Pepe" Smith appeared. Joey together on TV, a rare treat—possibly one seen since the days of "Inuman Basa sa 32."

But even in the songs "Bang-Bang" and "Bahang Hadalan" didn't pull much of a surprise for pulsid rockers, what caused excitement was thumped playing/tone again—letting Gonzales do his lead guitar heroic shots, while Smith, as usual, played to the gallery in his usual crunkiness.

Revillame accompanied the bassist/drummer.

When he interviewed the three, Hanopol—once a pro too—stated rightning how "Bahang Hadalan" was written, diverting into a Biblical spiel ("It's about people living in a dark world . . . It's time to . . . repent"). Revillame wisely cut him off and swung another song, "Bisaya Barrio," with himself on vocals and Smith guitar-ly going back to the instrument he first learned to play—the drums.

Cinemalaya's 'New Breed'

THE CINEMALAYA PHILIPPINE Independent Film Festival named the 10 Films competing in this year's full-length ("New Breed") category during its launch last week.

The films are: "Halaw" by Marvin Dayao; "Limbunan" by Anthony Hangganahan; E. "Kinatay" by Erik Matti; Gerardo "Mayohan" by Dan Villegas and Paul Sta. Ana; "Rekbol" by Danny Arrastia.

"Sampaguita" by Francis Xavier Pasion; "Sheika" by Arnel Mardoquio; "Si Tesis, Si Tekoben at si Juana" by Art Kanapunan; "Ang Pamilya Ko" by Dennis Marasigan; and "The Leaving" by Ian Dean Loreaux.

The total eight-day exhibition period, which begins on July 9 has been extended to nine days. "This is to make way for more screenings to two of the seasons in the number of competing films," festival director Nes Jardin announced on Wednesday.

Jardin also said that the organizers of Cinemalaya still "intensify efforts to invite more foreign film programmers, festival directors and members of foreign media to boost efforts in promoting Philippine indie films internationally."

Entries to the short-film category are still being accepted until Feb. 15. The awards ceremony will be held on July 18 at the CCP.

Marinel R. Cruz

Piolo holds on to No. 1

THE TOP-SELLING ALBUMS in the Philippines for the week Jan. 11-17 based on Odyssey Music & Video store chain's nationwide sales report:

OPM

1) "Grenades," Pinoy Original, Star Records; 2) "Bate Na Nga," Willie Revillame, Star Records; 3) "Practice (Platinum Edition)," Swing Out!, MCA Music; 4) "The Love Songs of Jose Mari Chan (Deluxe Music One Edition)," Christian Bautista, Universal Records; 5) "Forever," MCA Music; 6) "Music + Me," Sarah Geronimo, Viva Records; 7) "For You," Richard Poon, MCA Music; 8) "Soundtrack Of The Soul," Miss Minchif Master; 9) "As I," Martin Nievera & Gary Valenciano, Universal Records; 10) "The Appointment," Ultrasoft, MCA Music.

US Top 10 singles

The best-selling recorded music including digital downloads in the United States, as they appear in next week's issue of Billboard magazine:

1) "TiK ToK," Ke$ha, RMG; 2) "Bad Romance," Lady Gaga, Interscope; 3) "Empire State Of Mind," Jay-Z + Alicia Keys, Roc Nation; 4) "Bedrock," Young Money Gran. Lloyd, Republic; 5) "Love The Way You Lie," Eminem + Rihanna, Aftermath/Interscope; 6) "Hey Soul Sister," Train, Columbia; 7) "Need You Now," Lady Antebellum, Capitol; 8) "Dynamite," Taio Cruz, Island Def Jam; 9) "Hey, Soul Sister," Train, Columbia; 10) "Need You Now," Lady Antebellum, Capitol.

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amanda seyfried
('Mama Mia!')

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GREENBELT 2

ALABANG TOWN CENTER

TRINOMA

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AYALA CENTER CEBU

MARQUEE

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GREENBELT
Australian Day
January 27; Greenbelt Park

AYALA CENTER CEBU
Meet & Greet Side A
January 29; 5:00 pm
Activity Center

MARKET! MARKET!
Hip Hop Exhibition - See the world's hippest hoppers
January 19-February 2;
Activity Center

TRINOMA
William Reiter and the Chess Piano Quartet
Live at Trinoma
January 26; 7:00pm
Level 3 Park

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2 reviews: Gloc-9 maps ...

Pancingan B1

By Patricia Cornelio

Since Bahaual original lyrics, with Orbandali's Gabbi Alpe singing the chorus in Visayan, offish to Sinugbuguhon's "Ito," Gloc-9 responds on the video of time and relationships with Gloc-9 Nadi's Gooky Chua joining her own memorable stamp on the song's ornate setting.

Gloc surprises nobody Marianne Pabico might with his song voice in "Bahala Na," a tune that speaks to hope; Gloc-9 in a solo spot rendering mind-free Tribute that tells the big "Bobo thing"; and Peter-mild's former band Hard-score Rainbow serving up beat rocking sound in "Bahagan Ko." Ulo-9's tribute to his mentor, using even the lyrics' lyrics.

Hands down, "Mahikulo" is Album of the Year material.

By Tony Maghirang

Salagay's dying year ong market fundraiser.

The record begins with a direct phone conversation and ends with an extended plea for human kindness tapped around Sampaguita's "Pinoy." In between, Gloc 9 maps out a possible future for rap but in the present, he unveil finally opens a Pandora's box of lessons in spirit and poverty that has damned this land.

"Matrilicks" sounds dead good, but it's also one of the saddest records you'll ever hear. Its true genius lies in the clash of what it means to be poor without a home in your own country. It sounds like a review of our collective fate from the past year and the last 400 years before it. Listen to it and weep.

FCI Singer in Manila last November

Why ...

From page D1

ironically, and though it's not a love song, it's romance in the 21st century sense, you know, romantic tragic."

The song is performed by the characters Gina, Jericho and Gloc-9 on Gin, the role earmarked for Lea Salonga during the RP runs.

Overall producer-host musical superstar Pia Magnayon has been associated with "Cats" since the show's premiere in 1981, came to the country in November for the launch of the Manila production, but was delighted, he said, that the Filipino busy theater was not hard-good up.

While says the pet "makes me! Clear. London, where he's based when the production has had a long break, or when there's "a specific cast new cast."

Dutch factor

Her only is Gina Jericho not a dancing part; it definitely to be a singing part either. Where needs.

The way last Grease (1995) would have been the great British actress Judi Dench. But she secured her Achilles tendon during rehearsals five days before opening night and had to be replaced by Elaine Paige, delaying the premiere for two weeks.

Judi Dench could not have sung, especially the way it's sung now (versus she's not a singer," says Whyte. "She could have spoken the part beautifully—had sung, had speak, she could have done that... and it would have been tragic and she'd have brought the house down and it would have been a wonderful!"

He is certain that Lea Salonga will be "wonderful, too, as usual, in her own exquisite way."

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GALLERIA

1 LEGION
2 SHERLOCK HOLMES
3 THE TOOTH FAIRY
4 OLD DOGS
5 THE SPY NEXT DOOR
6 AVATAR (Digital 3D)
7 Valentine: PEDIL
8 ALVIN & THE CHIPMUNKS: THE SQUEAKQUEL
9 GUARDIANS
10 THE IMAGINARIUM OF DR. PARNASSUS

MANILA

1 THE IMAGINARIUM OF DR. PARNASSUS
2 LEGION
3 THE TOOTH FAIRY
4 SUNSHINE
5 THE SPY NEXT DOOR
6 OLD DOGS
7 AVATAR

METRO EAST

1 OLD DOGS
2 TOOTH FAIRY
3 LEGION
4 THE SPY NEXT DOOR
5 SUNSHINE
6 AVATAR
7 ALVIN & THE CHIPMUNKS: THE SQUEAKQUEL
8 THE IMAGINARIUM OF DR. PARNASSUS

MOVALICHES

1 THE TOOTH FAIRY
2 THE SPY NEXT DOOR
3 THE IMAGINARIUM OF DR. PARNASSUS
4 LEGION

FORUM ROBINSONS

1 THE TOOTH FAIRY
2 LEGION
3 OLD DOGS
4 THE IMAGINARIUM OF DR. PARNASSUS

SHOWING on January 27

MOVIEWORLD

STA. ROSA

1 LEGION
2 THE TOOTH FAIRY
3 OLD DOGS
4 THE SPY NEXT DOOR

LIPA

1 SHERLOCK HOLMES
2 AVATAR
3 THE SPY NEXT DOOR
4 PREDATOR

SAN MARINAS

1 THE TOOTH FAIRY
2 OLD DOGS
3 THE SPY NEXT DOOR
4 LEGION

STARMILLS

1 THE SPY NEXT DOOR
2 ALVIN & THE CHIPMUNKS: THE SQUEAKQUEL
3 AVATAR
4 THE TOOTH FAIRY
5 OLD DOGS
6 LEGION

IMUS

1 OLD DOGS
2 THE SPY NEXT DOOR
3 LEGION
4 THE TOOTH FAIRY

ANGELES

1 LEGION
2 OLD DOGS
3 THE SPY NEXT DOOR
4 THE TOOTH FAIRY

TACLOBAN

1 LEGION
2 AVATAR
3 OLD DOGS

DUMAGUETE

1 AVATAR
2 THE REBOUND
3 UNIVERSAL SOLDIER: REGENERATION

BACOLOD

1 LEGION
2 OLD DOGS
3 THE TOOTH FAIRY
4 THE SPY NEXT DOOR
5 ALVIN & THE CHIPMUNKS: THE SQUEAKQUEL
6 AVATAR

ILOILO

1 THE TOOTH FAIRY
2 LEGION
3 AVATAR
4 THE SPY NEXT DOOR
5 UNIVERSAL SOLDIER: REGENERATION
6 OLD DOGS / SAGRADA FAMILIA

GENSAN

1 THE SPY NEXT DOOR
2 LEGION
3 THE REBOUND
4 AVATAR

KIDCOS NORTE (NOW OPEN!)

1 THE SPY NEXT DOOR
2 THE REBOUND
3 AVATAR

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LEGION

FORUM

metro manila

NORTH EDSA

1 THE SPY NEXT DOOR
2 ALVIN & THE CHIPMUNKS 2
3 OLD DOGS
4 LEGION
5 THE TOOTH FAIRY
6 THE IMAGINARIUM OF DR. PARNASSUS
7 LAST TWO DESSERTS

MALL OF ASIA

1 THE IMAGINARIUM OF DR. PARNASSUS
2 ALVIN & THE CHIPMUNKS 2
3 SHERLOCK HOLMES
4 THE SPY NEXT DOOR
5 LEGION
6 AVATAR

MEGAMALL

1 OLD DOGS
2 LEGION
3 THE IMAGINARIUM OF DR. PARNASSUS
4 LAST TWO DESSERTS
5 THE TOOTH FAIRY
6 AVATAR
7 ALVIN & THE CHIPMUNKS 2
8 THE IMAGINARIUM OF DR. PARNASSUS
9 SUNSHINE

CITY MANILA

1 OLD DOGS
2 THE IMAGINARIUM OF DR. PARNASSUS
3 SHERLOCK HOLMES
4 LAST TWO DESSERTS
5 THE TOOTH FAIRY
6 LEGION
7 ALVIN & THE CHIPMUNKS 2
8 THE SPY NEXT DOOR

FAIRVIEW

1 OLD DOGS
2 SHERLOCK HOLMES
3 THE SPY NEXT DOOR
4 THE IMAGINARIUM OF DR. PARNASSUS
5 AVATAR
6 LEGION
7 LAST TWO DESSERTS
8 THE TOOTH FAIRY
9 ALVIN & THE CHIPMUNKS 2

CITY SAN LAZARO

1 LEGION
2 SUNSHINE
3 THE SPY NEXT DOOR
4 OLD DOGS
5 THE TOOTH FAIRY

CITY BTSO. MESA

1 OLD DOGS
2 THE IMAGINARIUM OF DR. PARNASSUS
3 THE SPY NEXT DOOR
4 AVATAR
5 ALVIN & THE CHIPMUNKS 2
6 LAST TWO DESSERTS

SOUTHMALL

1 LEGION
2 SHERLOCK HOLMES
3 THE IMAGINARIUM OF DR. PARNASSUS
4 THE SPY NEXT DOOR
5 LAST TWO DESSERTS
6 ALVIN & THE CHIPMUNKS 2

MARIKINA

1 THE TOOTH FAIRY
2 SUNSHINE
3 THE SPY NEXT DOOR
4 OLD DOGS
5 LEGION
6 ALVIN & THE CHIPMUNKS 2
7 THE IMAGINARIUM OF DR. PARNASSUS

ALABANG

1 THE SPY NEXT DOOR
2 LEGION
3 OLD DOGS
4 THE TOOTH FAIRY
5 AVATAR
6 ALVIN & THE CHIPMUNKS 2

CITY MUNTINLUPA

1 THE SPY NEXT DOOR
2 LEGION
3 THE TOOTH FAIRY
4 OLD DOGS
5 AVATAR
6 ALVIN & THE CHIPMUNKS 2

CITY NAIA

1 THE SPY NEXT DOOR
2 LEGION
3 OLD DOGS
4 THE TOOTH FAIRY
5 AVATAR
6 ALVIN & THE CHIPMUNKS 2

luzon

CITY PUMPANGA

1 LEGION
2 THE SPY NEXT DOOR
3 ALVIN & THE CHIPMUNKS 2
4 OLD DOGS
5 LAST TWO DESSERTS

CITY LIPA

1 LEGION
2 AVATAR
3 THE SPY NEXT DOOR
4 LAST TWO DESSERTS

CITY LEGAZPI

1 LEGION
2 SUNSHINE
3 THE TOOTH FAIRY
4 AVATAR

CITY CLARK

1 THE TOOTH FAIRY
2 ALVIN & THE CHIPMUNKS 2
3 THE SPY NEXT DOOR
4 OLD DOGS
5 LEGION
6 AVATAR

CITY BATANGAS

1 LEGION
2 SUNSHINE
3 THE SPY NEXT DOOR
4 ALVIN & THE CHIPMUNKS 2

CITY BAGUIO

1 THE TOOTH FAIRY
2 LEGION
3 THE SPY NEXT DOOR
4 AVATAR
5 ALVIN & THE CHIPMUNKS 2

CITY BTSO. ROSA

1 THE SPY NEXT DOOR
2 LEGION
3 THE TOOTH FAIRY
4 OLD DOGS
5 AVATAR
6 ALVIN & THE CHIPMUNKS 2

CITY MARILAO

1 THE SPY NEXT DOOR
2 LEGION
3 OLD DOGS
4 THE TOOTH FAIRY
5 AVATAR
6 ALVIN & THE CHIPMUNKS 2

CITY ENTRE

1 THE SPY NEXT DOOR
2 LEGION
3 OLD DOGS
4 THE TOOTH FAIRY
5 AVATAR
6 ALVIN & THE CHIPMUNKS 2

CITY SANMARIANO

1 THE SPY NEXT DOOR
2 LEGION
3 OLD DOGS
4 THE TOOTH FAIRY
5 AVATAR
6 ALVIN & THE CHIPMUNKS 2

BALIWAG

1 THE SPY NEXT DOOR
2 LEGION
3 OLD DOGS
4 THE TOOTH FAIRY
5 AVATAR
6 ALVIN & THE CHIPMUNKS 2

BAGUIO

1 THE SPY NEXT DOOR
2 LEGION
3 OLD DOGS
4 THE TOOTH FAIRY
5 AVATAR
6 ALVIN & THE CHIPMUNKS 2

ROSARIO

1 THE SPY NEXT DOOR
2 LEGION
3 OLD DOGS
4 THE TOOTH FAIRY
5 AVATAR
6 ALVIN & THE CHIPMUNKS 2

visayas • mindanao

CITY DANAO

1 LEGION
2 OLD DOGS
3 ALVIN & THE CHIPMUNKS 2
4 THE SPY NEXT DOOR
5 SUNSHINE
6 THE TOOTH FAIRY

CITY CEBU

1 THE SPY NEXT DOOR
2 ALVIN & THE CHIPMUNKS 2
3 OLD DOGS
4 LEGION
5 THE TOOTH FAIRY
6 AVATAR

CITY MANDAUE

1 THE SPY NEXT DOOR
2 LEGION
3 OLD DOGS
4 ALVIN & THE CHIPMUNKS 2
5 THE TOOTH FAIRY
6 AVATAR

CEBU

1 THE SPY NEXT DOOR
2 LEGION
3 OLD DOGS
4 ALVIN & THE CHIPMUNKS 2
5 THE TOOTH FAIRY
6 AVATAR

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Prime time news with lovebirds Ces and Ricky

AFTER CES BREAKS FILE-storming captivity last year, my VS. client's how Ces and I finally call each other) more than deserves to have better and brighter days than 2010. Time enough, because her love life (and owner) are both in full swing.

Starting Feb. 15, she will be anchoring the prime time newscast of ABC (Hyacinth Channel 27), "Primetime News with Ces Bolos & Ricky Carandang" (weeknights at 8 p.m.). Ricky happens to be Ces' dayside and other. The couple that roasts the news together, stays together.

It drew by her the Emerald love notes, News and Current Affairs were her "Crush." They will soon be headline material!

***

Tina Santa has not yet given her wedding present to her daughter Gina and her hubby Pepe: "I promised to give them a set of bins. Because they left Benin for Papua."

At what point in the wedding did he say? "When the rest of Spain gave his message to the newlyweds," he recalls. "He said, 'Tito Jojo, please make note of bins.' That's Benin instead of downtown to Gina."

Gina may go by many names but being Tito Sotto's daughter still always be low level confidential.

***

Every time my BFF Pepa Fernandez has a major event going on in her life, courage is off stages. I can't help but marvel at how she has metamorphosed after all the stress and storm of late. It's good to know that silver Pepa and I look back and look forward, we find our friendship there.

Since we share our joys and our pains, I'm equally excited as she is for her Valentine concert with Martin Nievera, "One Amore Time" on Feb. 14 at the SMX Convention Center, SM Mall of Asia. How fun that girls' lechon of love keeping it real. Dawn, Ireland, I am so excited to find out who the one will be for me. I am more curious now to find out who I'll end up with in the end. Can be someone in the past, someone I secretly still banged and no one of my knowing or someone I have yet to meet. Then I get to say, "So, it's you."

What's her advice to an ex-guy-plus-an-item to someone friends like Marvin and Iza? "If enough, Before we decided to be friends, there were so many dramas in between," she says. "You have to realize that being upset with someone and holding on to your pain just pulls you down. Even if you wanna move on, you wonder that there are still a lot of hanging that you're carrying around. The only way to improve yourself is to accept the situation and forgive. It is difficult but after awhile you will notice how much better you will feel."

Now she will want to get married again? "How I miss I attend a wedding, I wonder be a bride again. It's every woman's dream, no why not?"

The Concert Queen deserves it. Prince Charming/Knight in Shining Armor who will never deliver our love more for least.

***

Sasha Mesmerages is all agog about her coming business, Sasha's Delicious. "For all who loved to cook, [and] to eat," she says, laughing. "I accept orders for small parties and group lunches. I make gourmet sandwiches, pasta, spanish, lechon and Pinoy dishes, plus my original recipes. I do all the cooking in my small kitchen." For all who loved to cook, [and] to eat, call me at 0915-7957686 or text me at 0915-7957686. I will soon come out with my own cookbook and I plan to put up a small resto."

Love conversation! Rudy is choosy with being pursued by the paparazzi. She's now pursuing her true passion.

E-mail: sonnyboybalbuena@yahoo.com